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**AESTHETICS AND POLITICS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH WOMEN'S
TRAVEL WRITINGS ON OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents
for their love, endless support
and encouragement.

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies *Aesthetics and Politics in Eighteenth Century Women's Travel Writings to Ottoman Empire*. This thesis argues that a comprehensive understanding of the representation of the Ottoman Empire in eighteenth-century English women's travel writing requires a new perspective through an analysis of cultural and political changes in the eighteenth century from Enlightenment to Romanticism. Of the only two eighteenth-century authors in the sample (Melman, 1995: 48) Lady Mary Montagu and Elisabeth Craven are two of the earliest English women travellers to Ottoman Empire; they both travelled in the eighteenth century and wrote several letters throughout their journeys. Nevertheless, their travel accounts portray conflicting visions of Ottoman culture. Placing great emphasis on Ottoman women and domestic culture, the former portrays an unbiased, open-minded, tolerant view about the Ottoman East whereas the latter is highly critical about Ottoman world, despises Ottoman women and culture while praising picturesque landscapes. Within this framework, Lady Mary Montagu's *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1994) from the Ottoman Empire between the years 1716 and 1718 reflect the cultural upheaval of Enlightenment, whereas Elisabeth Craven's *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople. In a Series of Letters from the Right Honourable Elizabeth Lady Craven, to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandebourg, Anspach, and Bareith Written in the Year MDCCLXXXVI* (1789) from almost the exact same spots in 1786 hint at the characteristics of the increasing imperial thought and Romanticism in England.

Keywords: Lady Mary Montagu, Elisabeth Craven, Enlightenment, Romanticism, British Imperialism, Ottoman Empire.

RESUMO

A presente dissertação estuda a Literatura de Viagem sobre o Império Otomano de autoria feminina segundo uma perspectiva estética e política. Esta tese defende que uma abordagem abrangente da representação do Império Otomano na escrita de viagens das mulheres inglesas do século XVIII requer uma nova perspectiva através de uma análise das mudanças culturais e políticas no século XVIII, do Iluminismo ao Romantismo. As duas únicas autoras do século XVIII nesta amostragem, (Melman, 1995: 48) Lady Mary Montagu e Elisabeth Craven, são duas das primeiras mulheres britânicas viajantes para o Império Otomano; ambas viajaram no século XVIII e escreveram várias cartas ao longo de suas viagens. No entanto, os seus relatos retratam visões díspares da cultura otomana. Colocando grande ênfase nas mulheres otomanas e na cultura doméstica, a primeira adota uma visão imparcial, aberta e tolerante sobre o Oriente Otomano, enquanto a segunda é extremamente crítica sobre o mundo otomano, despreza as mulheres e a cultura otomanas enquanto elogia paisagens pitorescas. Neste contexto, *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1994) sobre o Império Otomano entre os anos 1716 e 1718 reflectem a agitação cultural do Iluminismo, enquanto *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople. In a Series of Letters from the Right Honourable Elizabeth Lady Craven, to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandebourg, Anspach, and Bareith Written in the Year MDCCLXXXVI* (1789), respeitante quase exatamente aos mesmos locais em 1786, aponta para as características do crescente pensamento imperial e do Romantismo em Inglaterra.

Palavras-chave: Lady Mary Montagu, Elisabeth Craven, Iluminismo, Romantismo,

Imperialismo Britânico, Império Otomano.

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INTRODUCTION

People have been traveling for centuries and have produced many travel accounts in different literary genres. Many of these travel accounts reflect cross-cultural encounters and travellers' impressions of other cultures, and travelling has always been a popular topic in the literary canon, being represented in oral and written forms: tales, letters, maps, legends, novels, poems, memoirs, songs, journals. Travels of pilgrims, soldiers, diplomats, adventurers and merchants have been addressed frequently in different literary genres. The metaphor of life as a journey summarizes how the concept of travel is inevitably integrated to people's lives and hence, travel writing genre is linked with individual biographies, regional and national cultures. "The history of travel writing is naturally bound up with the history of travel itself – its various forms, circumstances and cultural contexts, so that any study of travel writing necessitates an interdisciplinary approach." (Korte, 2000:3) Therefore, travel writings can be analysed within different aspects such as religion, social class, art, gender, race, political and economic relations.

A travel account describes a real journey by a traveller who records and presents her/his impressions of the destination. It works as a bridge between the traveller's thoughts, beliefs, values and the actual outer reality and expresses her/his experiences. As a concrete outcome of a cross-cultural experience, a travel account provides its reader a second-hand experience, or an insight to a different world while at the same time projecting its' author's own subjectivity.

Propelled in a large part by a salutary curiosity about the habits and customs and dimensions of other people's lives and surroundings, travel writers have traditionally included vivid descriptions of flora, topography, climate, animal and insect life, foodstuffs and local sexual customs. (Kowalewski, 1992: 8)

Taken into account that technology was far more primitive than today, a travel account in the eighteenth century must have evoked great curiosity to its' audience about a distant and foreign world. The travel writer constructs a travel narrative to describe unknown or foreign territories as well as societies. However, that does not mean that the traveller is completely objective throughout the process as she / he reflects her / his own perspective about the destination; she / he contributes with her / his own cultural values and intellectual norms to

the travel account. Hence it is possible to state that travel accounts do not always reflect reality. The travel writer is inevitably affected by her / his background knowledge and values; this notion raises questions about the writer's cultural and ideological ideas. The time period during which the journey takes place should be considered for a thorough understanding of travel account.

Travelers, ambassadors, adventurers, missionaries and scholars, from the Crusades to the Renaissance and to the 18th century, visited the Ottoman Orient and observed the Ottoman world in its own context. They observed and wrote about different aspects of the Ottoman world. There are similarities as well as differences between travellers' opinions, and none of these texts is identical in approach to the Orient. (Baktır, 2007:3)

The Ottoman Empire and Europe had already had military, political and economic acquaintance with each other since long before the eighteenth-century, which constitutes an already established negotiation between two worlds: East and West. With the European economic, military and political uprising along with the emerging imperialism in the eighteenth century, interest towards the Middle East as well as Africa and Asia increased. Relatedly, Turkey started to become a popular destination for travel writing and much have been written about Turkey and Ottoman Empire in travel accounts, oriental tales and letters since then.

Along the major routes of the Empire, quite a few strangers were thus engaged in their various errands: we have already encountered the merchants, British subjects, Frenchmen or else Iranian Armenians, travelling to Aleppo, Bursa or Izmir. In addition, there were non-commercial travellers of varying types, particularly pilgrims: Muslims from Morocco or India on their way to Mecca, Iranian Shi'ites visiting the sanctuaries of Ottoman Iraq, and also Christian and Jewish visitors to the Holy Land. But there were also European gentlemen in search of pleasure, instruction, and topics on which to write books, to say nothing of Dalmatian subjects of Venice seeking whatever employment they could get in the Ottoman capital. (Faroghi, 2004: 161)

Due to the economic, cultural, political and intellectual changes thanks partially to the interaction with the new countries, early eighteenth century saw also an increase in two main holistic movements: Enlightenment and Romanticism.

The Enlightenment Age based development and happiness of humankind on the expansion of knowledge, the utilization of reason, and scientific method. Its perspective was reformist and humanitarian and followed the belief that individuals could understand and

improve themselves as well as their environment through inquiry, reason, observation and empirical knowledge. Empirical knowledge developed on the basis of observation and induction, a process that sense experience gained importance as a resource of knowledge. It focused on understanding the humans and nature through sceptical questioning and scientific reasoning. Religion was questioned during the course of Enlightenment. Scholastic and dogmatic teachings of religion were criticized and rejected in related with deistic thinking and anti-supernaturalism. The emphasis on rationalism and empiricism brought scepticism about superstitions and supernatural occurrences. The power of reason and natural laws gained more importance than religious superstitions. The Age of Enlightenment can be traced in travel literature in the early eighteenth century too. Travel writers wrote as observers and pursued inquiry and knowledge. English people travelled throughout and outside Europe for self-discovery to broaden their horizons, and so they also brought home knowledge, values and customs of their destinations.

In the late eighteenth century, travel writers tended to describe foreign landscapes in an aesthetic discourse. Relatedly, the last decades of the century witnessed the flourishing of a new artistic movement, namely Romanticism, which emphasized feelings and emotions as a source of aesthetic appreciation and judgement. The foundation of modern aesthetics dates back to this century, during which aesthetics became a philosophical inquiry subject. Focus of aesthetic questions were about beauty, sublimity and picturesque, and Romantic discourses integrated emotions such as horror, pain, terror to emphasize feeling as a source of aesthetic knowledge, judgement and experience. Picturesque formed an interconnection between the beauty and sublime. (Gilpin, 1792: 6) Unlike Enlightenment's objectives of understanding and explaining Nature by means of empiricism and Rationalism, Romanticism aimed at appreciating Nature with imagination.

Although "in an age when the home was literally and symbolically woman's place" (Bohls, 1995: 17) and "women did not fit the traveller's image as heroic explorer, scientist, or authoritative cultural interpreter" (17), pioneered by Lady Mary Montagu and succeeded by Elizabeth Craven, travelogues by women travellers about the Ottoman Empire started to emerge in the eighteenth century. This century witnessed great changes in philosophy, politics, science and aesthetics in England and Europe, as well as a rapid increase in European colonization over foreign lands. Lady Montagu's letters from the years 1716 – 1718 reflect the cultural upheaval of Enlightenment, whereas Elizabeth Craven's letters from the year 1786 hint at the characteristics of the increasing imperial thought and Romanticism. Based on

these two travellers' conflicting visions about Ottoman East, this thesis *Aesthetics and Politics in Eighteenth Century English Women's Travel Writings on Ottoman Empire* questions how representations of the Ottoman Empire differed in the eighteenth century and argues that cultural and political changes during this period are the keystones for a comprehensive understanding of eighteenth-century English women's travel writing about the Ottoman Empire.

This dissertation brings in a new perspective to these two travellers' letters by arguing that cultural and political factors are important in explaining differences in their writings. Critics who have concerned themselves with Lady Montagu's and Craven's letters have usually dealt with the subject matter from a postcolonial framework and it "derives from the false dichotomy between a constantly powerful West and a correspondingly subordinate East resulting from anachronistic applications of Edward Said's *Orientalism*." (Andrea, 2008: 1) The Ottoman Empire is absent in Said's key study of the cultural politics of Western representation of the East and Said does not particularly focus on Orientalism before the nineteenth century. Indeed, researches which are specifically concerned with Lady Mary Montagu's and Elizabeth Craven's letters are quite rare to find in the most well-known research platforms such as Scopus, Research Gate and Google Scholar. Billie Melman's "The Eighteenth-Century Harem (1717-89): Lady Montagu, Lady Craven and the Genealogy of Comparative 'Morals'" chapter in *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work* (1992) is an exception that covers specifically Montagu's and Craven's letters in a historical and cultural context and this article has been a great inspiration for the formation of this thesis. Just like Melman, who successfully discussed the comparativeness of 'morality' and the relativeness of Western European values (Melman, 1995: 78) in Montagu's and Craven's letters, this thesis aims at suggesting an alternative way to understand eighteenth-century English women's travelogues from the Ottoman Empire with their own cultural, philosophical and historical values.

"Historical and Theoretical Background" chapter of this dissertation offers the theoretical and historical foundations that the dissertation's arguments and explanations are based on. "Historical Background" explores Ottoman Empire's and England's main historical interconnection points before the eighteenth century and examines the historical contexts of each in the eighteenth century separately. "Theoretical Background" investigates the cultural, intellectual and artistic changes that happened throughout the course of eighteenth century in England. This section first follows main notions and ideas of Enlightenment, which are later

associated with Lady Mary Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters* (2004), followed by a scrutinising of the increase of imperialism in England, the occurrence of Romanticism and its' characteristics, and eighteenth-century aesthetics all of which are applied to Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople* (1789) in the following pages. The theoretical background is used to determine the themes of Enlightenment, Imperialism and aesthetics to be used to analyse the letters. "Methodology" section describes how the writings of these two travelogues are analysed in this study. The chapter, "The Enlightenment Traveller: An Inquiry into Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*" reflects Montagu's representation of Ottoman world in relation with Enlightenment's frame of mind and aesthetics. The chapter, "Imperial Discourse and Aesthetics in Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople*" investigates why and how Craven's description of the Ottoman Empire differs from Montagu's in a scope of imperialism in England and aesthetics of Romanticism. "Results" pointedly summarizes previous chapters and final remarks are made in "Conclusion".

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Historical Background

Turkey has always been a frequent travel destination for centuries due to its geographical position as a bridge between Asia and Europe, its geopolitical importance, and its rich historical and cultural background. These factors have led to numerous travel accounts about Turkey, and relatively the Eastern world. Travel accounts from the Turkey written by foreign travellers, ambassadors and merchants date back to the fourteenth century. It was the period when the Ottoman Empire was gaining power and territory in Europe, Asia and Africa as well as the Arab peninsula. The empire continued to expand from 1453 onwards, after the conquest of Constantinople, until the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. As mentioned by Turhan, it was after the treaty in 1699 that the Ottoman Empire “opened itself up more fully to Western influences, trade, and political involvement.” (Turhan, 2004: 26)

Although it witnessed changes so important as to herald a new era, the Ottoman eighteenth century cannot be said to have received due attention in research.... The Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century had lived not so much through peace treaties as through armistices; its foreign affairs were not marked by institutions of the European type. In the eighteenth century, however, the Empire may be considered to have already joined the system of period ... with respect to its diplomatic relations and international legal institutions; commercial and consular ties; free choice of residence for missionaries, security of navigation, etc.... (Ortaylı, 2012: 111-113)

The Ottoman Empire was not alien and mysterious to English travellers, writers and audience due to previous travellers’ accounts. There had already been a military contact between Ottoman and English powers before the eighteenth century, but it was during Queen Elizabeth’s era that a long and peaceful period between the Ottoman Empire and England started. Queen Elizabeth thought that the Ottoman and English cooperation against Spain would be a great factor in the English sea-trade expansion and asked for help from the Ottoman Sultan Murad III. Sultan Murad III’s letter proves that the Ottomans accepted the Queen’s requests in the condition of accepting Ottomans’ friends as friends, and Ottomans’ enemies as their enemies ¹.

¹ Stated in the letter of Sultan Murad III to Queen Elizabeth I on 25 October 1593. Accessed on 10 June 2018. <<https://www.devletarsivleri.gov.tr/icerik/3201/sultan-iii-muradin-ingiltere-kralicesi-i-elizabete-ingiltereye-yardim-icin-buyuk-bir-donanmanin-gonderilecegini-bildiren-mektubunun-kopyasi/>>

Obviously by the mid-sixteenth century, when mercantilism began to dominate the national monarchies of the West, England sought to share in the profits of the East and West trade ... The English sought capitulations, which had become a necessity in order to continue trade with Ottoman Turkey... (İnalçık, 1997: 364-365)

The Queen's strategy served its purpose, capitulations were given to England and the Ottoman seas was opened to English merchants. The result of the cooperation between the Ottoman and the English people was the Levant Company founded in 1581 which provided safe and free trade in open water to English merchants for three hundred and fifty years. As it was a bilateral agreement, Ottoman merchants also used English harbours and some of them even lived in England during this time. The political and economic alliance between Ottomans and England was kept successfully with the help of ambassadors and merchants.

I who had often proved the Barbarisme of other Nations at Sea, and above all others, of our owne, supposed my selfe amongst beares, till by experience, I found the contrary; and that not only in ordinary civility, but with so ready service, such a patience, so sweet, and gentle a way, generally through them all, as made me doubt, whether it was a dreame, or reall; if at any time I stood in the way, or encombred their ropes, they would call me with a Janum, or Benum, terms of most affection. (Blount, 1977: 75)

One of the earlier travellers, Thomas Dallam, a famous organ-builder, travelled to the Ottoman Empire between 1599 -1600 to deliver an organ for the Sultan Mehmet III. Dallam regarded the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet III as a life-threat while describing a scene in the Ottoman court ² as he states in his diary: "I thought he had bene drawing his sorde to cut of my heade" (Dallam, 1893: 71). Whereas Henry Blount, *au contraire*, proves the so-called Ottoman barbarism wrong and praises the Ottomans' advancement, order and affection while depicting his journey in 1650 to the Ottoman Empire in *A Voyage into the Levant* (1650).

From the eighteenth century they developed a taste for discovery and self-discovery through the exploration – and exploitation – of other lands and peoples, and through their encounters with other societies and civilisations. The development of imperialism and travel and tourism – indeed, the development from one to the other – challenged the perceptions that the British had of the world – and the world of the British. (Farr and Guégan, 2013: 1)

² Thomas Dallam states in his description of the Ottoman Sultan during a gift-giving ceremony: "He satt so righte behind me that he could not se what I did; tharfore he stood up, and his Coppagaw removed his Chaire to one side, wher he myghte se my handes; but, in his rising from his chaire, he gave me a thruste forwardes, which could not otherwyse dow, he sat so neare me; but I thought he had bene drawing his sorde to cut of my heade." in "The Diary of Master Thomas Dallam, 1599-1600" in *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*. London: Lincoln's Inn Fields. 1893.

The English colonisation in the Americas, scientific and technological advancements, expansion in the sea trade as well as other factors led to an increase in Western influences over foreign lands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From eighteenth century onwards, English exploration and exploitation of foreign countries increased, and the English diaspora challenged perceptions of the World. The Ottoman Empire, in the meanwhile, started to lose power both in political and economic scenes. The Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 was a turning point both for the Ottomans and the European as it ended the Ottoman control over Central Europe and it marked the first territorial loss of the Ottoman Empire after a long expansion period. Moreover, the corruption in the army and the loss of trade routes greatly affected the period of regression in the Empire. Notwithstanding the military, political and economic losses in the century, the Ottoman Empire saw a flourishing interest in arts, architecture and culture in the eighteenth century, a period called Tulip Era. The age signifies “not only an awakening interest in arts, science and cultural development and European ways, but also an increase in corruption, indulgence and luxury at the Court.” (Çırakman, 2002: 105) This was the period when the stereotypical image of Ottomans started to change as mentioned by Ortaylı:

Eighteenth century Europe, despite occasional wars, may be on the whole be aptly called the continent of peace and prosperity. ... Europeans of the time were really becoming Europeans, the French, German and English intelligentsias were merging with one another. Although it was of course somewhat outside the general atmosphere, the Ottoman Empire also entered a phase of increasing European influence. (Ortaylı, 2012: 113-114)

With the growing interest in exploring different cultures and people, journeys to the East increased, and so it is possible to say that the eighteenth century is characterised as the starting age of oriental letters and oriental tales. Early eighteenth-century's spirit of the Enlightenment had a touch on travel writers who acknowledged, discussed, and appreciated Eastern culture. It was also in the eighteenth century that travel accounts by female travellers began to appear in English literature, though it is questionable if they belonged to the canon at that time. Thereof, it is crucial to scrutinize the cultural, intellectual, political and economic aspects of England in the eighteenth century to understand the changing representations of the Ottoman Empire by English travellers.

The influence of the greatly increased scale of contact with the world beyond Europe is evident in many aspects of eighteenth-century life: in patterns of consumption, both

of food and clothing; in themes for poetry, novels, and theatrical spectacles... (Marshall, 1998: 18)

England saw great changes in economy, politics, society, arts and culture in the long eighteenth century. Sea power and commerce brought wealth to English merchants and an increased consumption of foreign goods such as coffee and chocolate “made the World more familiar to English people.” (Baktır, 2007: 18) In this regard, English colonisation over the World made itself influential and apparent in daily life. While in early eighteenth century England possessed small parts in North America, the Caribbean and Bengal, by 1783 New South Wales, Sierra Leone, Trinidad, Demerara, Mauritius and the Cape Colony, India, Bengal, North America and the Caribbean became English colonies. The military and economic power as consequences of colonial expansion brought great wealth to England that is, Great-Britain since the Union Act in 1709, England’s rising colonial power, industrialisation, factory work, new machinery and scientific developments brought changes in English society. It is in the eighteenth century that England started to be called British Empire, becoming the World’s biggest imperial power.

2. Theoretical Background

Travel — always a source of knowledge and power – informed Enlightenment investigations of human nature and civilization. Explorers went in search of trade routes or potentially docile populations and brought back raw materials for working through the terms of Europe's global consciousness. (Bohls, 1995: 17)

Europe witnessed great changes thanks to the interaction with the foreign World in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Introduction of new cultures made it possible for thinkers, writers or travellers to question the nature of human beings, civilizations and knowledge. Traditional beliefs, orthodox ideas and religion started to be questioned in the spirit of reason and inquisition. Enlightenment philosophers in England and throughout Europe questioned authority and ideated that could be improved through questioning and rational change. The age of Enlightenment throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth century opened new and radical discussions about art, culture, religion and intellectuality with

the rise of reason, empiricism, liberty, scientific methods and scepticism. Rationalism and empiricism are the two theories of knowledge which marked the period, whereas scientific methods such as deduction, induction and experimentalism were the adopted means to uncover the mysteries of the universe; scepticism an ancient Greek philosophical theory, was partially adopted in the approach to science and sometimes and in some quarters to institutionalised religion. Liberty, on the other hand, became a key issue, as Immanuel Kant points out its importance for progress in science against superstition, as well as in politics and the emergence of citizenship in his essay “What is Enlightenment” (1784): “Nothing is required for this enlightenment, however, except freedom, and indeed the most harmless among all the things to which this term can properly be applied. It is the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point.” To Kant, it is only by means of freedom that individuals can use their own rational capacities and to speak their own minds.³

Empiricism flourished on the basis of observation and induction, and sense experience gained importance as the mind ideas come into it from the senses. Scepticism as a major method in the Enlightenment way of thinking as well. David Hume asserted doubt about whether knowledge can be obtained from senses or from reason. He concluded that only probabilistic reasoning might lead to possible conclusions and presented significant challenges to scientific method with critique of causality and inductive reasoning. Such empirical and sceptical arguments have had great influence on philosophy and science even today. A shift from metaphysics to epistemology was also experienced in the Enlightenment age as a result of the scientific revolution. Metaphysics is the study which explores existence, and reality; while epistemology the theory of knowledge⁴ which studies the nature and justification of knowledge. The scientific method focused on understanding the natural world through questioning and reason, instead of exploring metaphysical phenomenon.

Enlightenment's effect on politics led to major political revolutions in Britain, America, and France. These revolutions centred on the consent of the governed, social contract, freedom, and equality. In his major work *Leviathan* (1651), Thomas Hobbes suggested ideas about social contract and the relation of the individual to the state, which later influenced John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) and *Le Contrat Social* (1782) respectively. John Locke was a key figure in political

³ Kant, Immanuel. “What Is Enlightenment?” (1789)

<<http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html>> Accessed on 10 September 2018.

⁴ Bristow, William, “Enlightenment” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Fall 2017 Edition. Ed. by Edward N. Zalta. <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/enlightenment/>> Accessed on 10 September 2018.

philosophy during the Enlightenment Age and emphasized natural freedom of human beings, natural law, consent of the governed as well as justifying the overthrow of government when it fails in *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1689).

Religion was also a major discussion topic of the Enlightenment. The monolithic and scholastic nature of church came to an end and religion was being questioned within the notions of deism and anti-supernaturalism. The emphasis on rationalism and empiricism during the Enlightenment brought scepticism about superstitions and supernatural occurrences. Hume emphasized the idea that miracles are violations of the laws of nature; they are simply parts of past superstition. Individuals had the power to think for themselves and could reach logical conclusions by the power of reason, without the help of immaterial beings.

Theism was challenged by natural law and the study of nature through science, and deism gained prominence among the intelligentsia during the Enlightenment Age. According to deism, individuals can know God with reason and the study of nature, not by supernatural phenomena. Life and the universe can be explained with the help of natural processes. Deism questions religious practises such as prayer and revelation. David Hume's challenging the divinity and the unconditional belief in God in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) ⁵ serves a good example for the age of questioning and reason:

What truth so obvious, so certain, as the being of a God, which the most ignorant ages have acknowledged, for which the most refined geniuses have ambitiously striven to produce new proofs and arguments? What truth so important as this, which is the ground of all our hopes, the surest foundation of morality, the firmest support of society, and the only principle which ought never to be a moment absent from our thoughts and meditations? But, in treating of this obvious and important truth, what obscure questions occur concerning the nature of that Divine Being, his attributes, his decrees, his plan of providence? These have been always subjected to the disputations of men: Concerning these, human reason has not reached any certain determination: But these are topics so interesting, that we cannot restrain our restless enquiry with regard to them; though nothing but doubt, uncertainty and contradiction have, as yet, been the result of our most accurate researches. (Hume, 1779)

Hume's emphasis on enquiry and research challenges medieval scholasticism and promotes the importance of scientific methods to verify the beliefs about God and religion, which brings us to scepticism about universal truth. He also refers to the contributions of different nations' principles to philosophical thoughts thanks to a more open commerce of the

⁵ Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. eBooks @ Adelaide. 2014. Accessed on 19.06.2018. <<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/hume/david/h92d/preface.html>>

world in the same text.⁶ Interaction with other nations is undoubtedly an influencing factor for the Enlightenment thinkers. To Hume, people's curiosity towards unfamiliar things is a natural inclination, therefore people should be eager to inquire and investigate.

As one of the most influential Enlightenment thinkers, John Locke asserts in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) the human mind is a *tabula rasa* shaped by experience, and sensations and reflections are two main sources of all our ideas:

I must appeal to experience and observation, whether I am in the right: the best way to come to truth... I pretend not to teach, but to inquire, and therefore cannot but confess here again, that external and internal sensation are the only passages that I can find of knowledge to the understanding.⁷

He further adds that our knowledge is founded by experience and observation derived by senses, which hints at the modern conceptions of identity, consciousness and the self. To him, the spirit of inquiry is about the nature of understanding and the human mind is completely free to create associations, impressions and ideas to reach for self-discovery. In this regard, Locke's argument supports the idea that travel is a source of knowledge gained by experience and observation.

The Enlightenment was based on the idea that the expansion of knowledge, the utilisation of reason, and commitment to scientific method would eventually result in development and happiness of humankind. The Enlightenment perspective was reformist and humanitarian and it was believed that a person could improve herself / himself and her /his environment to make the world a better place through inquiry, reason, knowledge and scientific method. The spirit of Enlightenment can be clearly seen in travel literature in the early eighteenth century. Travellers wrote as observers and were eager for inquiry and knowledge. European people travelled throughout and outside Europe for self-discovery, bringing home the values and customs of the places they visited. As Samuel Johnson states in the *Rambler* No:4 (1750) the task of writers "...requires, together with that learning which is to be gained from books, that experience which can never be attained by solitary diligence, but must arise from general converse, and accurate observation of the living world." Hence, it is not enough only to learn from books and old knowledge, but it's mandatory for an

⁶ "But at present, when the influence of education is much diminished, and men, from a more open commerce of the world, have learned to compare the popular principles of different nations and ages, our sagacious divines have changed their whole system of philosophy..." Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. eBooks @ Adelaide. 2014.

<<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/h/hume/david/h92d/complete.html>> Accessed on 19.06.2018.

⁷ Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. (1689)

eBooks @ Adelaide. 2015. <<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/locke/john/l81u/complete.html>> Accessed on 19.06.2018.

Enlightenment age writer to take advantage of other countries' knowledge and values. Because, an insight about other cultures improves can enlarge a person's vision about the World and an enlightened mind can offer new and interesting materials to her / his audience.

Cultivated with the spirit of Enlightenment, eighteenth-century philosophers tended towards "a distinctive kind of multi-faceted and multi-valenced appreciative experience of objects, and those of their qualities that cause the experience" (Friday, 2004: Introduction) and the reason behind this tendency can be traced in the century's empiricism and reasoning.

...the legacy of John Locke's sensational philosophy into new and secular interpretations of the mental and moral worlds in which individual women and men lived their lives, interpretations which drew upon concepts of what was 'natural'. New analyses of the human mind and emotions emphasized the interaction between environmental forces and the individual self, and the relationship between the senses, feeling and reason. (Rendall, 2004: 256)

John Locke's remarks on the origins of human knowledge and the operation of the human mind in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) is crucial in the formation of eighteenth-century aesthetics as he refers to a distinction between ideas of sensation and ideas of reflection in the composition of ideas. Ideas of sensation are delivered to the mind by means of the senses: hearing, seeing, tasting, touching and smelling. These operations enable sensations or impressions of objects outside the mind. Ideas of reflection, however, are ideas formed based on reflections on our own minds, such as thinking, remembering, believing, doubting and perceiving. He also refers the association of ideas, an operation of the mind about the ability of one idea to bring another idea before the mind. For example: the idea of water can be a cause of another idea such as the ocean because of a natural associative correlation. There are also internal and external senses: when the external senses meet objects or actions, the internal senses reply by generating pleasure or displeasure. When Locke's ideas are applied to aesthetics, we can say that beauty is a distinctive pleasure produced by an internal sense which is stimulated by an external stimulus presented to the mind by the external senses. Hence, it is possible to say that both external factors such as the environment or objects and internal factors such as a person's age, background, gender and race affect judgement upon aesthetics.

Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. (Hume, 1987: 146)

David Hume's theory of beauty in "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757) claims that although beauty and deformity are connected entirely to the sentiment or pleasure and not qualities in objects, there are some natural characteristics or qualities in objects that produce feelings of pleasure or pain. Unlike his contemporaries, he does include the importance of colour in aesthetic judgements and he treats aesthetic pleasure or pain as an instinctive and natural human response. The sentiments regarding beauty and ugliness are reflective impressions, in other words they are responses to sensory impressions. According to him, "Truth is disputable; not taste: what exists in the nature of things is the standard of our judgement; what each man feels within himself is the standard of sentiment." (Hume, 1975: 171) Despite his remarks on beauty and taste, Hume does not entirely cover the concepts of picturesque and sublime, which are important subject matter of eighteenth-century aesthetics, in his works.

By the end of the century, a new movement in Europe, namely Romanticism, was starting to get off the ground as a reaction to Enlightenment's immense emphasis on reason and rationalism. According to Encyclopædia Britannica:

Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, preferring the medieval rather than the classical. It was partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment, and the scientific rationalization of nature—all components of modernity. Romanticism can be seen as a rejection of the precepts of order, calm, harmony, balance, idealization, and rationality...⁸

Romanticism emphasized emotion as a source of aesthetic judgement and experience, integrating feelings such as horror, pain, terror. Sublime played an important role in Romanticism as it puts great emphasis on emotion and individualism. Objects that are both beautiful and terrifying such as steep mountains, thunderstorms, deep and dark forests are examples for sublime, and new categories of the sublimity, picturesque and beauty of nature were brought into aesthetics in the eighteenth century. The Romantic view of nature therefore differed from the Enlightenment's viewpoint. Romantics believed that the World had mysteries which would remain inexplicable by reason but could be perceived by intuition and imagination as mentioned by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* (1817): "The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of the

⁸ "Romanticism." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2018. Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9083836>> Accessed on 26 June 2018.

mind itself. It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination.”⁹

However according to Saree Makdisi, understanding romanticism not only as an aesthetic and literary movement, but also as a cultural formation requires a thorough analysis of the British imperialism. He states in *Romantic Imperialism*:

In the years between 1790 and 1830, over one hundred and fifty million people were brought under British imperial control. During those same years, one of the most momentous outbursts of British literary and artistic production took place in romanticism, announcing the arrival of a whole new age, a new world of social and individual traumas and possibilities. (Makdisi, 1998: xi)

Thanks to the changes taking place throughout the eighteenth century in Britain, such as the increasing importance of industrialization and trade, changing policies of imperial powers, developing urban culture, the process of modernization and attitudes towards non-Europeans; Romanticism “is not a single intellectual movement but a complex of responses to certain conditions which Western society has experienced and continues to experience since the middle of the eighteenth century.” (Butler, 1982: 184) Relatedly, travel accounts play an important role in the understanding of the influence of imperialism on Romanticism in a political and cultural discourse.

Aesthetic discourse deals with the categories and concepts of art, beauty, sublimity, taste, and judgment, and more broadly with the pleasure experienced from sensuous surfaces or spectacles. Analyzing language as discourse entails understanding it as socially and historically located, taking shape and circulating within specific institutions, practices, and genres of writing. (Bohls, 1995: 11)

In an age of inquiry, sensibility and colonial expansion was also an important period for the formation of modern aesthetics. The more people travelled to ‘sensuous surfaces or spectacles’, the more it became necessary to analyse aesthetic discourses within social and historical perspectives.

⁹ Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Chapter XVII. *Biographia Literaria*. 2004. Project Gutenberg. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6081/6081-h/6081-h.htm>> Accessed on 10 September 2018.

The eighteenth century was an age of travellers anxious to get to know new landscapes and new customs, not out of a desire for conquest, as in previous centuries, but in order to savour new pleasures and new emotions. This led to the development of a taste for things that were exotic, interesting, curious, different and astounding. (Eco, 2004: 282)

Beauty, sublimity and picturesque became subject matters of travel writing and it is possible to say that the aesthetic discourse in British travel writing is partially a result of colonial expansion and interaction with non-European cultures such as the Ottoman Empire. Travel writing in the Romantic period was “a hybrid discourse that traversed the disciplinary boundaries of politics, letter-writing, education, medicine, aesthetics and economics.” (Gilroy, 2000: 1)

It was in the long eighteenth-century that aesthetics gained momentum a subject of philosophical inquiry in England and related discourses dealt with a number of questions such as: “What is the nature of beauty?” “What is sublime?” “Is there is a standard of taste and of beauty?”. The picturesque was also an important category of aesthetics introduced into intellectual debates in the second half of the eighteenth century. By then, Enlightenment Age’s rationalist ideas about aesthetics started to be challenged with the idea of considering the experiences of picturesque, beauty and sublime as non-rational, instead of attributing aesthetic experience as a rational decision. “A beautiful thing is defined by the way we apprehend it, by analysing the reaction of the person who pronounces a judgement of taste. The debate about Beauty shifted from the search for the rules for its production or for its recognition to a consideration of the effects that it produces.” (Eco, 2004: 275) In other words, an individual may look at an object and decide it is beautiful; *au contraire* the aesthetic pleasure or experience comes naturally as a basic human instinct. William Gilpin, an English artist known as one of the originators of the idea of the picturesque, describes picturesque beauty in *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to Which is Added a Poem, on Landscape Painting* (1792) as:

... the matter stands with regard to *beautiful objects* in general. But in *picturesque representation* it seems somewhat odd, yet we shall perhaps find it equally true, that the reverse of this is the case; and that the ideas of neat and smooth, instead of being picturesque, in fact disqualify the object, in which they reside, from any pretensions to picturesque beauty — Nay farther, we do not scruple to assert, that roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful, and the picturesque. (Gilpin, 1792: 6)

The picturesque can be considered as an interconnection point between the beautiful with emphasis on smoothness, order and regularity; and the sublime which is about vastness, magnitude, and intimations of power. The picturesque covers aspects of these two. The sublime is associated with the immensity or greatness of Nature and human responses to it. It is something overwhelming, either because of enormity (a high mountain, extremely large waves), infinity (timelessness, death) or obscurity (mist, night, intense darkness), all of which do not suit the notions of the precise, moderation, control and reason of the Enlightenment thinking. While Enlightenment aimed at understanding and explaining Nature by empiric and rationalist methods, Romanticism cherished and appreciated Nature with sentimentality. Landscape and seascape painting, especially those from late eighteenth century, often represent mountains, storms and violent seas, volcanic eruptions and avalanches, all of which raise strong emotions. Edmund Burke's description of sublime in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) mainly focuses on darkness, vastness, magnificence, loudness and suddenness, and our reaction to them as a kind of pleasurable terror.

Most of the ideas which are capable of making a powerful impression on the mind, whether simply of pain or pleasure, or of the modifications of those, may be reduced very nearly to these two heads, self-preservation, and society; to the ends of one or the other of which all our passions are calculated to answer. The passions which concern self-preservation, turn mostly on pain or danger. (Burke, 1990: 35-36)

In other words, the viewer, listener or reader feels a kind of temporary paralysis of the strength of understanding, feeling and imagination when faced with the sublime. Therewithal, the sublime allows its audience to deeply feel the thrill of danger as an aesthetic experience. The sublime was particularly important for Romanticism as Romantics loved nature and they believed that the sublime could transcend the rational with feelings of pain or pleasure.

According to Burke, beauty is "a social quality; for where women and men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them" (39) whereas sublime "is an idea belonging to self-preservation ... that its strongest emotion is an emotion of distress." (79) The passions concerning self-preservation are mostly about horror, pain and danger while the passions of beauty mainly lie at joy and lust. While beauty is

associated with smoothness, smallness, brightness and delicateness; sublime is associated with massiveness, darkness and gloominess.¹⁰

Aesthetics deal with the spectator and the spectacle. British women travellers, as culturally aesthetic spectators, used the language of aesthetics in their travel accounts. Women travel writers such as Montagu and Craven “found various ways of exposing the flawed logic behind the idea that aesthetic appreciation could be uniform for perceivers in widely disparate material and social situations.” (Bohls, 1995: 7) The language of aesthetics was not merely about beauty but also about picturesque and sublime in women’s travel writings. And “these women’s texts offer disrupted, disjunctive, or openly revisionary renditions of aesthetic discourse that register in various ways the problematic position of the female aesthetic subject.” (20)

3. Methodology

Lady Mary Montagu wrote about her experiences as a woman traveller in the Ottoman Empire between the years in 1717-1718, and similarly Elizabeth Craven recorded what she had gone through almost at the exact same places in the Ottoman East in 1785-1786. Both writers lay great emphasis on common topics about Ottoman culture and society, more particularly about Ottoman women, harems, domestic and daily life, and landscape. Although they travelled in the eighteenth century and wrote several letters throughout their journeys, their travel accounts portray conflicting visions of Ottoman people and culture. The contrast between their travel discourses deserves questioning why such a drastic change might have happened as for the portrayal of the Ottomans.

The reason for the contrasting descriptions of the Ottoman Empire in the seventy-year-long gap between the writings of Lady Mary Montagu and Elizabeth Craven can be the social, economic, political and intellectual changes in the Ottoman Empire and Britain in the eighteenth century. As shown in the previous chapters, travel writing is an outcome of a cross-cultural encounter and is deeply intertwined with the writer’s national values and culture, and her / his destination’s. This thesis explores these two women’s travel writings in relation with

¹⁰ “On closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs that we should compare it with the sublime; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent: beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line; and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation: beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy: beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure...” (Burke, 1990: 113)

the changes in social, economic, political and intellectual spheres in Britain in the eighteenth century within their particular historical and cultural context. More specifically, this thesis argues that Lady Mary Montagu illustrates notions of Enlightenment in her descriptions of Ottoman people and culture while Lady Elizabeth Craven presents the Ottoman East in an imperial and Romantic discourse. This argument will be put forward by an in-depth critical reading of Montagu's and Craven's letters.

The critical and systematic reading of the letters allows us to compare and contrast the differences in the writings of the two authors. Based upon the literature survey of the previous chapter, main themes and notions of Enlightenment, Imperialism and Romanticism are determined for a systematic analysis of these letters. Harem and Turkish bath, beauty of women, social and economic liberty of women are the main themes for analysis in the letters of both writers. Besides those themes, I have scrutinised Enlightenment issues and ideas such as the rejection of previous writers' accounts about the East, deism and the nature of religion, scientific revolution and individual freedom in Lady Montagu's works. In Elizabeth Craven's letters, I have searched the traces of imperial thought and Romanticism. While imperialism in Craven's work revolves around racism, representation of Harem and Turkish baths, social and economic liberty of women, ugliness of women; Romanticism mainly emphasizes on beauty, picturesque and sublime.

CHAPTER I

THE ENLIGHTENMENT TRAVELLER: AN INQUIRY INTO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU'S *TURKISH EMBASSY LETTERS*

'Came young into the hurry of the world' ¹¹, Lady Mary was born in 1689 to an unhappy childhood. After her mother's death in 1693, Lady Mary was sent to her grandmother's manor where she spent the early years of her life. As Lady Mary stated in one of the letters she wrote to her daughter in 1757, the only memory she remembered was running very hard to catch the sunset ¹². This symbolic desire to reach the beauty and mystery of life soon showed itself in Lady Mary's interest in literature. Though she did not receive a proper formal education, she spent most of her time in her father's library and familiarized herself with a large number of English and French writers by the age of fourteen. Thus, this self-educated young woman set her career as a literary persona.

Thanks to her father's political and financial status, she was lucky enough to meet some of the key figures of the Augustan Age, "... a time when politics and letters knew no division but lived off each other, creating an urbane, sophisticated, anti-romantic and even cynical literature." (Desai, 1994: x) Lady Mary found great pleasure in this witty discourse and the tone she used in *Turkish Embassy Letters* clearly shows the influence Augustan literature had on her writings.

It was in 1715, three years after she married Edward Wortley Montagu, that she met Alexander Pope, later with whom she would be the centre of a public scandal. She started writing town eclogues, which describe and mock upper-class rituals. It was also when she contracted smallpox, a disease that killed her brother. Although she survived, its cost was a severe damage on Lady Mary's skin.

Lady Mary, "who retained her essentially romantic spirit under the lacquered veneer of the society lady and wit" (Desai, 1991: xv) left for Turkey on 2 August 1716, accompanying her husband diplomatic journey. Her two-year-long travel through Europe to Turkey introduced her a possibility of a freed personality ¹³. After her return to England, she involved herself in inoculation against smallpox that she learnt during her trip to Turkey and had her son inoculated there although she was harshly criticized for such an experiment. Upon her

¹¹ Letter to Wortley Montagu, 9 April 1711. *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol. 1.* 1837. P. 165.

¹² Letter to Lady Bute, 7 July 1757. *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Vol 3.* 1837. P. 161

¹³ Introduction by Desai, Anita in *The Turkish Embassy Letters*. London: Virago Press. 1994. P. xxi.

scandalous reputation with Alexander Pope and her decaying marriage, she moved to Italy in 1739, only to come back after twenty-three years in 1762. It was in 1763 that her *Turkish Embassy Letters* were published for the first time in *The London Chronicle*.

... the reason why the *Embassy Letters* survived the years may be that in travelling to the East she was able to break away from the rigid confinements – mental and intellectual as much as physical – of her own society, and showed herself exceptionally open to new impressions and points of view. (Desai, 1994: xxvi)

Lady Montagu tended to compare what she saw and experienced in foreign lands with the customs and traditions of England of that time. However, she neither dramatized nor exaggerated, but instead, she cherished the culture, art, architecture and customs of these lands. In this regard, *Turkish Embassy Letters* can be referred as an exposition of an artistic and cultural exploration of the unknown. Her first encounter with a non-European and non-Christian society was in Turkey and it's where she felt a deep admiration towards the Ottoman culture in a way that she associated manners of this new civilization with classical poetry.

Nevertheless, her most intimate praise was to Ottoman women. Lady Mary Montagu was struck by the beauty of the women and it was not easy for her to represent “the beauty of this sight, most of them being well proportioned and white skinned, all of them perfectly smooth and polished by the frequent use of bathing.” (Montagu, 1994: 135) She felt great freedom in wearing the veil as she could walk down the streets without being recognized or molested. She was especially impressed by the fact that Ottoman women had the right to have their own money.

The great success of the Turkish letters lies at least partially in the circumstance of her escaping for a year or two from her confining society and experiencing a new world without the prejudices with which she was born. (Desai, 1994: xxx)

Lady Mary Montagu's ability to see herself through the eyes of others while observing and analysing a culture with its own values makes her unique and as a pioneer in female travel writing to the Ottoman Empire, her influence on the upcoming travel writers cannot be despised. Although she compared what she saw in Turkey to what she was already accustomed with in England, she did not alienate the East unlike most subsequent women

travel writers. She commented on Ottoman and English culture as well as previous travel writers to the Ottoman Empire.

Montagu herself had mastered both the *Arabian Nights* and François Petis de la Croix's *Mille et un jours* (1710-12), commonly known as the *Persian Tales* and, before and during her journey, had embarked on a Jesuitical syllabus that included the Koran, in the French version, and practically every available report in English and French on the Ottoman Empire (notably the works of travellers like Paul Rycart, Richard Knolles, François Thevenot, George Sandys, Aaron Hill, Dumont and G. F. Gemelli-Carreri) and Turkish prose and poetry which, by the middle of 1717, she could study in the original. (Melman, 1995: 82-83)

As stated by Melman, Lady Montagu was already familiar with previous accounts about the Ottoman Empire and she, a well-equipped traveller, using several literary traditions as references to her own travel accounts. Her first actual encounter with the Ottoman territory was in Belgrade and Lady Montagu finally reached the taste of East she longed to see and feel. (Murphy, 1988:41) In Belgrade, she studied Ottoman language and literature, especially the poetry. Besides reading Ottoman literature and studying the language, she had conversations about religion with a scholar named Ahmet Effendi Bey “who charmed Lady Mary with his knowledgeable talk of the literature and culture of his land.” (Desai, 1994: xvi) Apart from performing intellectual activities, Montagu witnessed forbidding experiences such as politicians’ homicides, corruption of Janissaries, the beheading of one of the interpreters for spying, and passing over the fields of Karlowitz where the Ottoman army was defeated heavily.

Later on, she visited Sophia, Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and then Adrianapolis (Edirne) where she stayed for two months in an elegant palace provided by Sultan Ahmet III. In Edirne, she had a great opportunity to explore the streets, meet Ottoman society and become an insider of the Ottoman women. She visited Turkish baths, watched the Sultan pass by the mosque, dined with the Grand Vizier’s wife, made friends such as Fatima – whom Lady Montagu described with great admiration – and visited Selimiye Mosque. She achieved a certain amount of sarcasm, fame and originality with her unbiased discourse to represent the Ottoman East from an Enlightened female perspective in the letters to her correspondents back in England. She carefully traced what had been stated by her male counterparts who visited Ottoman Empire before her and refuted their observations by her own experiences.

They never fail to give you an account of the women, which ‘tis certain they never saw, and talking very wisely of the genius of men, into whose company they are never

admitted, and very often describe mosques which they dare not peep into. (Montagu, 1994: 104)

Preceding travel writers referred to Ottoman women as “the most lascivious and immodest of all women, and excel in the most refined and ingenious subtilties to steal their pleasures” (Rycaut, 1668: 153) with “the strange and curs’d Pollution of inverted Nature” (Hill, 1709: 80); and “if they have a will to eat radishes, cucumbers, gourds, or such like meats, they are sent in unto them sliced, to deprive them of the means of playing the wantons” (Withers, 1653: 55). She criticized preceding writers “both individually and collectively, openly and indirectly, for the ignorance these authorities disclose, for their prejudice and inaccuracy.” (Melman, 1992: 83)

Maybe things were somewhat different for women, at least if the foreign partner was willing to learn Ottoman and was as gifted and energetic as the eighteenth-century travel author Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. For it appears that, among highly placed Istanbul ladies, the requirements of social position and polite behaviour did not limit contacts with female strangers quite as stringently as was true among males. (Faroghi, 2004: 177)

According to Montagu, their absurd and incorrect claims about Ottoman women were unrealistic. She claimed that a woman traveller had more advantages over a male traveller as she could easily enter the Harem and gain an insight into the actual Ottoman life via intimate friendships. Thanks to her exquisite experiences about Ottoman women’s lives, she could not “forbear admiring either the exemplary direction or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them.” (Montagu, 1994: 71)

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literary representations of Ottoman women occur in variant Eastern and Western forms. Both are in the main the product of male observation and, more problematically, of masculinist valuation.... As for the European image of the Ottoman woman, the traveller’s-eye view was directed to the preoccupations, though not necessarily the meanings, that Ottoman society itself employed. The domestic woman, the obedient woman, the pious woman and their antitheses were templates for Europeans as much as for Ottomans. (Zilfi, 2006: 227-228)

By challenging the projection of patriarchal abuses onto the Ottoman world (Andrea, 2008: 77), Montagu constructed an original narrative about the Ottoman East from a particular female perspective so that her audience would be surprised at an account so

different from what they had been entertained with by male travel writers, who were very fond of speaking of what they didn't know. (Montagu, 1994: 85) Previous travel writers' writings on harems did not draw on an observable reality as those spaces had been *terra incognita* to male Westerners. (Melman, 1992: 62) It is an inevitable fact that as a woman, she was privileged and was able to visit the most intimate parts of Ottoman life such as harems and *hamams*¹⁴, her harsh criticism on previous travel writers' accounts on the Ottoman world hints at the Enlightenment Age's characteristic of rejecting traditional and putative institutions and thoughts. Her scepticism renders on the manners of mankind, which do not differ as widely as previous voyage writers would make English people believe. (Montagu, 1994: 72)

I am afraid you'll doubt the truth of this account, which I own is very different from our common notions in England, but it is not less truth for all that. ... I see you have taken your ideas of Turkey from that worthy author Dumont, who has writ with equal ignorance and confidence. Tis a particular pleasure to me here to read the voyages so far removed from truth and so full of absurdities I am very well diverted with them.¹⁵ (Montagu, 1994: 104)

Lady Montagu not only rejects, but also mocks previous writers such as Jean Dumont, Baron de Carlsroon, who claims that Turks are opposite to Europeans in almost all respects. (Dumont, 1696: 149) Montagu suggests opposite views about the distorted knowledge about Ottomans in an anecdote from Belgrade Village. She objects to the stereotypical Western notions about sexual and cultural morals about the East and approaches the subject matters from an unbiased and tolerant perspective in opposition to the distorted misinformation caused by ignorance and prejudice of previous writers.

Hume ... insisted that we cannot understand the nature of the present without some notion of its roots in the past. This required a grasp of the culture and tradition from which the present emerged, and awareness of the often complex causal connections that occurred. Only with such awareness can anyone in the present decide what needs revision or rejection in the repertoire of ideas and practices they have inherited; and only with such awareness can anyone hope to build on past successes and avoid past errors. (Jones, 2004: 7)

As an expert on David Hume, Peter Jones states in the Introduction of *The Enlightenment World*, it is crucial to learn and understand the past to constitute an awareness

¹⁴ Turkish Bath.

¹⁵ She refers to Dumont's *A New Voyage to the Levant Containing an Account of the Most Remarkable Curiosities in Germany, France, Italy, Malta, and Turkey: with Historical Observations Relating to the Present and Ancient State of Those Countries / by the Sieur du Mont; Done into English, and Adorn'd with Figures*. 1696.

of the present according to Hume. Lady Mary Montagu's remarks on previous writers set example on this notion of connection of ideas and practices between past and present. She creates an understanding of the Ottoman world between 1716 – 1718 by rejecting, avoiding and revising the past errors of previous voyage writers and reaches out to new, moderately sceptical, experience-based enquiries (Jones, 2004: 7) in the Age of Enlightenment. By absorbing and moulding other travellers' ideas and reflections on the Ottoman Empire, she created an alternative discourse which emphasizes existing knowledge and made a new interpretation within her own context. Her letters are the first-known of its kind for women's travel writing in England and from then on, her travel account has been taken as a reference or an example by several travel writers, historians, biographers and essayists.

... the preoccupation, throughout the Enlightenment, with the freedom of the individual, licenced certain changes towards sexuality and its organisation and regulation. First, sex became more discussable. Yet, at the same time, discourse on sexuality was refined and highly stylised. Montagu's description of the bathers is, as already mentioned, one exemplar. (Melman, 1992: 94)

What distinguishes Lady Montagu from previous travel writers is that she actually had a face-to-face contact with Ottoman women in harems and the Turkish baths where no foreign man was allowed to enter or even peep through; and her descriptions about Ottoman women addresses gender and sexuality in these clandestine spaces within several aspects such as the orientation of sex, social and economic liberty of women, beauty and individualism. As stated by Melman, it was during the Enlightenment age that sex, sexuality and their organisations became issues that could be discussed and commented on in an intellectual context thanks to the spirit of liberty and freedom of the individual and Montagu's description of Ottoman women portrays a discourse of an enlightened, refined and stylised sexuality.

Enlightened authors did their best to reveal the secret, as well as to expound the term, writing more about happiness than any previous period in western history. In doing so, they hoped to break with all previous norms, dispelling the mystery and mystique that had surrounded the concept of happiness for centuries. Whereas earlier ages had cloaked it in religion or fate, Enlightenment authors would unveil it in its natural purity, its naked state. And whereas previous ages had searched for happiness in faith, Enlightened observers would aim to see it clearly in its own right, with unobstructed eyes. Neither the reward of the next world nor the gift of good fortune or the gods, happiness was above all an earthly affair, to be achieved in the here and now through human agency alone. Ironically, however, in spreading this revolutionary gospel, this modern good news, Enlightenment thinkers put forth a faith of their own. (McMahon, 2004: 164)

“Cross-cultural representation in harem literature is free of the insurmountable barrier of sex and sexual taboos” (Melman, 1992: 62) and as an observer with ‘unobstructed eyes’, Lady Mary Montagu tried to unveil the truth with a natural purity by engaging in the phenomena and people and taking part in the ordinary activities of Ottoman women and in the rituals observed in harems, hamams and houses (62). She was particularly interested in the condition and position of women in an Ottoman house and she enjoyed intimate friendship with Ottoman women, whom she admired. She was welcomed by beautiful servants during her visits to upper class Ottoman women’s houses, where she was pleased with the hospitality of Ottoman women. She dined with ladies and drank coffee. The women of the harem played music and danced; she was given presents such as a perfumed handkerchief and visited bath houses. She mostly wrote about the joyful and prosperous atmosphere of Ottoman houses and prerogatives of the upper-class Ottoman women.

The Orient is discursively feminized and eroticized; West stands to East in a relation of proto-colonial domination that takes on a seemingly inevitable sexual character. Oriental women carry a disproportionate symbolic burden in this discourse. Doubly other and doubly exotic, they become a synecdoche for the Orient itself. Their supposedly insatiable sexual appetites offer an excuse for the sexualized domination that these travelogues underwrite. (Bohls, 1995: 28)

Turkish bath or hamam evoked an erotic, effeminate and sensual East image in Western imagination, but “never actually penetrated by male travellers, the women's public-baths were identified as the *loci sensuales* in the erotically charged landscape of the Orient.” (Melman, 1992: 89) One of the most fascinating and remarkable things to Lady Mary Montagu was the Turkish bath, or in her words ‘Turkish bagnio’, a space of beauty, entertainment and health for women according to her. She rejects previous male travellers’ remarks about the Turkish bath that it was a space for Ottoman women to gather for collective sexual affairs as well as men, who were also claimed to gather in baths for homosexual affairs. In her letter from Adrianople in 1717, she contorts the position of a Turkish bath from a space of exotic sexual fantasy to a space of aesthetic appreciation by describing a bath in Sofia as followed:

I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner

to a stranger. I believe, in the whole, there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles or satirical whispers that never fail in our assemblies when anybody appears that is not dressed exactly in fashion. They repeated over and over to me; ‘Güzelle, pek güzelle’, which is nothing but ‘charming, very charming’. The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all women being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed, yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture among them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our “general mother”. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian, and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or rib and, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces. (Montagu, 1994: 58-59)

She describes the architectural design of the Turkish bath upon visiting one in Sofia: the bath had five domes, each for a separate room: two for hot baths, two for normal baths and a big hole in the middle of the structure, which has hot and cold streams in it. Ottoman women gathered in the baths at least once a week for health and diversion and Lady Montagu associated the Turkish bath “where all the news in the town is told, scandal invented” (Montagu, 1994: 59) with coffee-houses. Women pampered and enjoyed themselves with conversation, coffee and sherbet for four-five hours once a week in baths. The Turkish bath was not only a meeting point but had social functions and significance. For example; traditionally, marriages were arranged at baths where mothers could see young women at their most natural state before they could marry their sons. According to Lady Montagu, those young women “with finest skins and most delicate shapes” (59) were so beautiful that a glance at them could improve the art of artists. She “was charmed with civility and beauty and should have been glad to pass more time with them” (60). The Turkish bath in Sophia was so interesting and charming to Lady Mary that she was reluctant to visit the Justinian’s church ¹⁶ and would have preferred spending more time with Ottoman women. Lady Montagu described the Turkish bath and its social function from a perspective that recognizes and respects the value of the other culture.

By depicting Ottoman women more open-minded, tolerant and enlightened than Western women, Lady Montagu’s reverses the role of a traveller and the ‘stranger’ and she emphasizes her own strangeness and otherness. Otherness, a concept Said registered in

¹⁶ Hagia Sophia, an iconic structure in Istanbul and an important monument both for Byzantine and for Ottoman Empires. First built as an Eastern Orthodox cathedral, it was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 29 May 1453. It was secularized and opened as a museum in 1935.

Orientalism (1978), is here approached as “the condition or quality of being different or other, particularly if the differences in question are strange, bizarre, or exotic.” (Miller, 2008: 587) It is an individual’s non-conformity to the social norms of her / his surroundings and the society. In this context, “otherness is about the complex processes and channels through which representations flow in different directions: the representation of the ‘other’ is integrally related to the representation of ‘self’” (Hallam and Street, 2000: 6) In other words, she, as a European, becomes the exotic or the foreign in the Turkish bagnio by narrating her clothes in a more suggestive way than the nakedness of the women in the bath. Ottoman women avoid insulting mimics and offending comments despite Montagu’s extraordinariness in a riding dress. Her remarks on slaves “without any distinction of rank by their dress” is a clear response to the stereotypical representation of women by Dumont, who says "there is no Slavery equal to that of the Turkish women." (1696: 268)

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s deeply felt consideration of Ottoman women, although standing alone in its sympathetic particulars, reflects the sort of cultural receptivity that was still possible in the early Enlightenment. Her account is not always the wise first-person reportage that later readers and Montagu herself make of it, but it injects a ray of empiricism into the study of Ottoman women – by which Montagu meant ladies of the privileged classes – and dispels the grosser misrepresentations of other accounts. Chief among these misrepresentations was the act of representation itself, Montagu argued, inasmuch as it was the product of male ‘observers’ who, lacking access and understanding, could only pretend to knowledge of Ottoman women. (Zilfi, 2006: 229-230)

Lady Montagu witnesses the bath routine of Ottoman woman and uses her experiences to challenge the previous popular discourses about the Ottomans and her empirical reasoning reminds John Locke’s remark in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* ¹⁷; “No man’s knowledge here can go beyond his experience.” Empiricism was a dominant tradition in the Enlightenment and Lady Montagu’s experience in a Turkish bath sets an example for empirical knowledge or sense experience, the knowledge or source of knowledge acquired by senses, observation and experimentation. Montagu presumes the intelligibility of Ottoman culture with empirical and rational thinking. Similarly, in the Enlightenment philosophy nature is something knowable and worth studying by empirical reasoning; the order of nature has great harmony that can be uncovered with knowledge and can be exploited when misunderstood or misinterpreted. In this particular Turkish bagnio scenery, Ottoman women’s

¹⁷ Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. eBooks @ Adelaide. 2015. <<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/locke/john/181u/complete.html>> Accessed on 19.06.2018.

nakedness and Lady Montagu's clothes form a juxtaposition of a state of nature and a distortion of nature; the clothed 'other' disturbs natural harmony. Instead of eroticizing the bath scenery, Montagu lays stress on the natural aesthetics of being naked.

Lady Montagu's remarks on the beauty of Ottoman women continues throughout her travel. Upon visiting Adrianople in 1717 she says:

I never saw in my life so many fine heads of hair. ... But, it must be owned that every beauty is more common here than with us. 'Tis surprising to see a young woman that is not very handsome. They have naturally the most beautiful complexions in the world and generally large black eyes. I can assure you with great truth that the court of England, though I believe it the fairest in Christendom cannot show so many beauties as are under our protection here. (Montagu, 1994: 71)

Lady Mary Montagu admires the natural beauty of women and their nudity, and compares the commonness of beautiful women in England and Ottoman Empire. Umberto Eco states in *On Beauty* (2004) that "in the eighteenth century the persistence of Baroque Beauty was justified by the aristocratic taste for giving oneself over to the sweetness of life, while the austere rigour of Neoclassicism was well suited to the cult of reason, discipline and calculability typical of the rising bourgeoisie." (239) In this case, Montagu decides to give herself to the sweetness of life by enjoying Ottoman standards of beauty with large black eyes and the most beautiful complexions that English beauties did not possess although she claims that they are the fairest in Christendom. Similarly, she depicts the proportioned beauty of the women during a bride receiving ceremony in Constantinople as followed: "Tis not easy to represent to you the beauty of this sight, all of them perfectly well-proportioned and white skinned, all of them perfectly smooth and polished by the frequent use of bathing." (135) The description of the bride reminds Neoclassicism austere rigour principles of simplicity and symmetry. (Eco, 2004: 239)

In *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716–1818*, Elizabeth Bohls refers to Lady Montagu's comparisons between European and Ottoman women as "tensions generated by a female aesthetic subject in a culture that constructs woman overwhelmingly as object, rather than subject, of the aesthetic gaze" (1995: 24) and Montagu's description of Ottoman women "boldly turns the language of aesthetics as a rhetorical weapon against Orientalist stereotypes." (24) Montagu is concerned about correcting highly eroticized and exoticized remarks of preceding male travellers about Ottoman women with the language of aesthetics:

A key element of the rhetorical strategy she develops to meet this challenge is an appeal to aesthetics, setting it against the offensive idiom of early Orientalism. By comparing the bathing women to works of European art, I will argue, she attempts to de-eroticize and de-exoticize them, neutralizing Orientalist stereotypes. But to accomplish this, she must present herself as someone capable of perceiving and judging aesthetically: a female aesthetic subject. (Bohls, 1995: 28)

For the Enlightenment thinker, “if it was possible to transmit knowledge between seemingly incommensurable cultures, then it was likely that human beings from different cultures were more like each other than unlike, and could well share a similar rationality.” (Outram, 2004: 559) Observing the Ottoman East from a female perspective gave Lady Montagu an intimate relationship with Ottomans as it made easier for her to identify herself with the Ottoman domestic culture. She did not rely on gender-based social and cultural differences between England and Ottoman Empire and argued that the distance between English and Ottoman culture does not create a fundamental difference.

The entary is a waistcoat made close to the shape, of white and gold damask, with very long sleeves falling back and fringed with deep gold fringe, and should have diamond and gold buttons. ... The *curdele* is a loose robe they throw off or put on according to the weather, being in rich brocade either lined with ermine or sables. The headdress is composed of a cap called talpock [*kalpak*], which is in winter of fine velvet embroidered with pearls or diamonds and in summer a light of shining silver stuff. (Craven, 1993: 69)

According to Lady Montagu *entari*, a type of long and loose shirt made of silk or cotton ornamented with different materials such as diamonds, silver or gold, did not have any sexual connotation, but has a practical and cultural significance. It was a custom for Ottoman women to wear *entari* and Montagu recognized and appreciated women’s dresses in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, she states that the way of dressing and veiling signified great liberty for women:

Tis very east to see they have more liberty than we have, no woman, of what rank so ever being permitted to go in the streets without two muslins, one that covers her face all but her eyes and another that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back and their shapes are wholly concealed by a thing they call a *ferace* which no woman of any sort appears without. ... You may guess then how effectually this disguises them, that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave and ‘tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her, and no man dare either touch or follow a woman in the street. This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery... The great ladies seldom let their gallants know who they are ... You may easily

imagine the number of faithful wives is very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from their lovers' indiscretion, since we see so many that have the courage to expose themselves to that in this world, and all the threatened punishment of the next, which is never preached to the Turkish damsels... Neither have they much to apprehend from the resentment of their husbands, those ladies that are rich having all their money in their own hands, which they take with them upon a divorce with an addition which he is obliged to give them. Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire. (Montagu, 1994: 71-72)

According to Lady Mary Montagu, veiling provided women with sexual, economic and social freedom. "Given that Europe did not give up burning and hanging witches until well into the eighteenth century" (Zilfi, 2006: 229), it would not be wrong to say that women in England were yearning for social or economic liberty those decades. Correspondingly, Montagu confessed to enjoy veiling while visiting public places in her letters from Constantinople saying: "The *yasmak* or Turkish veil, is become not only very easy but agreeable to me, and if it was not, I would be content to endure some inconveniency to content a passion so powerful with me as Curiosity" (Montagu, 1994: 126-127) and "I ramble every day, wrapped up in my *ferace* and *yasmak*, about Constantinople and amuse myself with seeing all that is curious in it." (133) Her usage of veil both in literal and metaphorical sense is significant (Melman, 1992: 85) and "it was what she had seen of women's life in Istanbul that formed the basis of what is, perhaps, her most famous generalisation about their freedom." (86) Furthermore, Montagu implied that the veil disguised class differences between Ottoman ladies and their slaves.

Tis also very pleasant to observe how tenderly he and all his brethren voyage-writers lament on the miserable confinement of the Turkish ladies, who are, perhaps, freer than any ladies in the universe, and are the only women in the world that lead a life of uninterrupted pleasure, exempt from cares, their whole time being spent in visiting, bathing or the agreeable amusement of spending money and inventing new fashion. (Montagu, 1994: 134)

To Lady Montagu, Ottoman "women of the middle and upper urban classes, whose disposable wealth enabled them to experiment with fashion and leisure time" (Zilfi, 2006: 255) were much freer than what had been said or written about them in previous travelogues. They led a life of pleasure, wealth and fashion. She mentions two main factors regarding the prosperous life Ottoman women had: social and economic status. The economic factor is an outcome of Ottoman women's partial economic liberty:

Ordinary women as well as women of the elites not only possessed moveable and immoveable property in appreciable amounts, but actively tended to their property rights. Women made and dissolved contracts. They sold, bequeathed, rented, leased and invested property, and they did so in substantial numbers. If women were not actively involved in safeguarding their wealth, as is sometimes argued, they need not have appeared in person in court, yet many women did so, often without male kin being present. ... Like most men, women acquired the bulk of their property through inheritance, usually as passed on to them from parents and spouses. Female heirs came into possession of as varied a range of inheritances as did men. Shares in shops and businesses, usufruct rights, and salary-bearing *vakıf* posts tended to be reserved in the first instance for male kin, but women are known to have inherited rights to all of these. (Zilfi, 2006: 238)

Ottoman women had the right to inherit, owe their own money and property, and were given divorce stipend, therefore many Ottoman women were economically independent. Moreover, Lady Montagu considers the veil a symbol of freedom. Ottoman women could 'own' their own bodies thanks to the veil and go in the streets without being recognized as veiling provided Ottoman women sexual and social freedom.

In the Turkish bath in Sofia, Lady Montagu did not want to take off all her clothes, so she just opened her shirt and showed her corset. Upon her refusal to be naked in front of people, she mentions, "... they believed I was locked up in that machine, that it was not my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband." (Montagu, 1994: 60) Montagu refers satirically to her dress as a restriction to her individual freedom. Her sarcastic remarks evoke Enlightenment's recognition of individual freedom to pursue happiness as a legitimate life-goal. Accepting that individuals had the right to think for their selves and awaken their intellectual powers, Enlightenment acknowledged the power of reason to understand humans and the world to transform in the pursuit of to a better and fulfilled human existence. Similarly, Montagu opposed to Islamic particularity of women's objectification purely as a breeding machine:

... any woman that dies unmarried is looked upon to die in a stake of reprobation. To confirm this belief they reason that the end of the creation of woman is to increase and multiply and she is only properly employed in the works of her calling when she is bringing children or taking care of them, which are all the virtues that God expects from her; and indeed, their way of life, which shuts them out of all public commerce, does not permit them any other. Our vulgar notion that they do not own women to have any souls is a mistake. 'Tis true they say they are not of so elevated a kind and therefore must not hope to be admitted into the paradise appointed for men, who are to be entertained by celestial beauties, but there is a place of happiness destined for souls of the inferior order where all good women are to be in eternal bliss. Many of them are

very superstitious and will not remain widows ten days for fear of dying in the reprobate state of a useless creature. But those that like their liberty and are not slaves to their religion content themselves with marrying when they are afraid of dying. This is a piece of theology very different from that which teaches nothing to be more acceptable to God than a vow of perpetual virginity. Which divinity is more rational I leave you to determine. (100)

Besides defending individual freedom, Lady Montagu criticized conventional customs and practises of religion using her empirical investigation of Ottoman women. It is only by becoming 'slaves to their religion that Ottoman women could become useful creatures. The Turkish historian and Professor in History, İlber Ortaylı, refers to this issue in *Ottoman Studies* (2012) as followed:

The woman is in fact the most important member of the traditional family, but her status both there and in society in general does not measure up to her role in production. This standing is nevertheless enhanced with age and increasing number of children. Naturally, I am not going to claim that women were free in traditional society. ... And of course, we cannot really speak of the freedom of men in such a society either, because they, too did not take part in the process of production of their free will. But the women's dependence on the male members of the family extended beyond marriage, and she was in the position of a factor of production transferred from one family to another. (Ortaylı, 2012: 158)

Montagu's implication that religion brings restraint over individual liberty raises scepticism about divinity and rationality associated with religion. Her criticism is not only against Islam, but Montagu also questions 'the vow of perpetual virginity to be more acceptable to God' in Christianity. Like most Enlightenment thinkers, Montagu approached both Islam and Christianity with a reason-based examination and criticized on the aspects of religion which seemed irrational to her. Then "how did Lady Mary use this deist philosophy, with its logic of making the Other familiar and its two-tiered system for categorising religions, to understand the strange lands and customs about which she wrote?" (Shaw, 1998: 136) The answer to this question can be found in a letter from Constantinople in 1718, in which Montagu remarks on the popularity of deism amongst Ottoman intellectuals as followed:

I can truly inform you, sir, that the Turks are not so ignorant as we fancy them to be in matters of politics or philosophy, or even of gallantry. ... the science flourish amongst them. The *effendis* (which is to say, the learned) do very well deserve this name. They have no more faith in the inspiration of Mohammed than in the infallibility of the pope. They make a frank profession of deism amongst themselves or to those they can

trust, and never speak of their law but as of a politic institution, fit now to be observed by wise men, however at first introduced by politicians and enthusiasts. (110-111)

In the beginning of the century, the Ottoman Empire was suffering from economic and institutional chaos but in the process of modernization, “Ottoman society was in search of a new life-style, and a new art and social cultural was emerging.” (Ortaylı, 2012: 77) Relatedly, one can infer from Lady Montagu’s anecdote about Ottoman intellectuals that deism was taking roots in the eighteenth century. Observation, science and progress were key words of the Enlightenment wise man and neither Mohammed’s inspiration nor the Pope’s infallibility were topics of interest for deist Ottoman intellectuals. In fact, Montagu refers to an intellectual in Belgrade as “no stranger to the parties that prevail among us” (Montagu, 1994: 111) as he is familiar with John Toland, a rationalist freethinker of his time and the writer of *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696), a classic manifestation of deism. It is not an argument asserting or proving that Lady Montagu herself defended notions and doctrines of deism in *Turkish Embassy Letters*, but instead, this passage points out that Montagu was aware of the rationalistic, sceptical and critical approaches to religion from both worlds: East and West.

Of course the scientific enterprise involved all manner of linguistic apparatuses. Many forms of writing, publishing, speaking, and reading brought the knowledge into being in the public sphere, and created and sustained its value. The authority of science was invested most directly in specialized descriptive texts, like the countless botanical treatises organized around the various nomenclatures and taxonomies. Journalism and narrative travel accounts, however, were essential mediators between the scientific network and a larger European public. They were central agents in legitimating scientific authority and its global project alongside Europe’s other ways of knowing the world, and being in it. (Pratt, 2003: 29)

Along with her criticism towards religious practices, Lady Mary Montagu gave great importance to scientific enterprise evolving in Europe. Her travel account, as mentioned by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (2003), works as a mediator between scientific developments in foreign countries and English public. Montagu’s emphasis on the scientific method in the Ottoman Empire are on two main issues. Firstly, she employs a scientific discourse towards genetics of the mixture of races resulting from intermarriages.

The suburbs of Pera, Jtophana and Galata are collections of strangers from all countries of the universe. They have so often intermarried that this forms several races of people the oddest imaginable. There is not one single family of natives that can

value itself on being unmixed. You frequently see a person whose father was born a Grecian, the mother an Italian, the grandfather a Frenchman, the grandmother an Armenian and their ancestors English, Muscovites, Asiatics, etc. This mixture produces creatures more extraordinary than you can imagine.... But the family which charms me most is that which proceeds from the fantastical conjunction of a Dutch male with a Greek female. As these are natures opposite in extremes' this is a pleasure to observe how the differing atoms are perpetually jarring together in the children, even so as to produce effects visible in their external form. (Montagu, 1994: 111-112)

Constantinople at that time was crowded with people from all over the world due to its historical and religious importance as well as its attractive geopolitical position for trade and commerce. The city in Lady Montagu's letters represents "encounters between cultures and ethnicities, conflicts between political goals or economic interests, mixtures between creeds and mentalities, equilibria between opposing tendencies and, most of all, a constant process of brokerage and mediation between actual or potential rival forces." (Eldem, 1999: 138) Lady Montagu's deductions of the mixture of races is a great example for an empirical observation conducted on Ottoman subjects in Constantinople, the crossroad of the world. Based on empirical knowledge, scientific experiments and first-hand observations about the natural and the nature of people and societies were performed. Natural law was the basis of the scientific revolution in Enlightenment and an interest in physics, biology and chemistry raised intellectual enquiry and questioning. Classification of human races based on physical differences, geographic diversity, language and nutrition habits were some of the distinguishing characteristics between different races; and behavioural and psychological observations were also conducted throughout the Enlightenment; for instance Montesquieu's portrayal of French and Parisian civilizations in *Lettres Persanes* (1721). Montagu's comments on the visible effects of the combination of different genetic characteristics portray an early exploration of modern genetics.

The eighteenth century has been described as a time of increasing medicalization of Western societies, but before; "the concepts of health and illness were not generally linked to biological models and functions espoused by professional medicine. ... For many, sickness remained mysterious, often unpredictable and mostly unavoidable event, the result of blind fate or divine punishment." (Risse, 1992: 153) Focus on the natural world, employment of the scientific method on the observable and pursuit of wellness promoted by physical health led to an increase in medicalization during the Enlightenment. Health was considered to be a natural state of the body and could be maintained, protected and enhanced with the benefits of

medicine, and prevention and eradication of diseases could be a profound step for the prosperity of mankind. Lady Mary Montagu's encounter with small pox vaccination in the Ottoman Empire was a milestone "for the good of mankind" (Montagu, 1994: 82) in the history of medicine in Europe.

It was during her visit in Adrianople in 1718 when Lady Montagu discovered the local practice of vaccination against smallpox. She had a particular ambition in the prevention of smallpox because she suffered from the disease which severely damaged her skin and caused her brother's death at the age of twenty. Therefore, she had her son inoculated by an old Greek practitioner in 1718 and upon her return to England, she had her daughter inoculated in 1721 by her physician Charles Maitland. (Bazin, 2011: 30) Lady Montagu pioneered the introduction of this medical practice to England upon witnessing first-hand the inoculation process:

A propos of distempers I am going to tell you a thing that I am sure will make you wish yourself here. The smallpox, so fatal and so general amongst us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of engrafting, which is the term they give it. There is a set of women who make it their business to perform the operation... the old woman comes with a nutshell full of the matter of the best sorts of smallpox, and asks what veins you please to have open. She immediately rips open that you offer to her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch) and puts into the vein as much venom as can lie upon the head of her needle... There is no example of any one that has died in it, and you may believe I am well satisfied of the safety of the experiment, since I intend to try it on my dear little son. I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it if I knew anyone of them that I thought had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. (81-82)

The practice of inoculation was not available in Western Europe in the beginning of the century and "the idea that smallpox could be conquered, even eradicated, was not a necessary companion to the new method when it was introduced in Europe. This potentiality only gradually emerged and was not clearly articulated until the end of the eighteenth century." (Eriksen, 2013: 517) Lady Montagu's interest in the Eastern method of inoculation against smallpox raised controversy amongst physicians and surgeons and she was accused of practising an experiment conducted 'only by a few ignorant women amongst an illiterate and

unthinking people’¹⁸ In spite of criticisms when first introduced, inoculation became a standard method for preventing small pox by eighteenth-century medicine.

You never saw camels in your life, and perhaps the description of them will appear new to you... They seem to me very ugly creatures, their heads being ill-formed and disproportioned to their bodies. ... and the beasts designed to the plough are buffaloes.... They are all black, with very short hair on their hides and have extreme little white eyes that make them look like devils. ... Horses are not put here to any laborious work, nor are they at all fit for it. They are beautiful and full of spirit but generally little and not so strong as the breed of colder countries; very gentle, however, with all their vivacity, swift and sure-footed. ... I will assure you I never rid a horse in my life so much at my command. My side-saddle is the first was ever seen in this part of the world and gazed at with as much wonder as the ship of Columbus was in America. Here are some birds held in a sort of religious reverence and for that reason multiply prodigiously: Turtles on the account of the innocence, storks because they are supposed to make every winter pilgrimage to Mecha. To say the truth, they are the happiest Subjects under the Turkish government, and are so sensible of their privileges they walk streets without fear and generally build in the low parts of houses. Happy are those that are so distinguished: the vulgar Turks are perfectly persuaded that they will not be that year either attacked by fire or pestilence. (Montagu, 1994: 82-83)

“The eighteenth-century classificatory systems created the task of locating every species on the planet, extracting it from its particular, arbitrary surroundings (the chaos), and placing it in its appropriate spot in the system (the order—book, collection, or garden) with its new written, secular European name.” (Pratt, 2003: 31) Due to the Enlightenment influences on Lady Mary Montagu’s letters, she had a classifying attitude towards animals in the Ottoman Empire. She states that camels, asses, buffalos are ugly creatures, their heads have strange structures and bodies are not proportioned, buffaloes’ little white eyes make them look like devils. Likewise, Montagu compares camels and buffalos to beautiful, elegant and spirited horses in Western countries. To her, the lowest animal species in this scale are camels, asses and buffalos, implying that the horse is superior to other animals. In this particular case, Enlightenment’s exploration of the order in the universe can be seen in Montagu’s works.

With her own class biases intact, she contends that the life of upper-class Ottoman women had much to recommend it – creature comforts, warm relationships with other women of the household, including servants and slaves, the possibility of loving marriages and advantageous protections afforded by the anonymity of veiling. (Zilfi, 2006: 230)

¹⁸ In *A Letter to Dr. Freind: Shewing the Danger and Uncertainty of Inoculating the Small Pox* by William Wagstaffe. London. 1722. P. 5.

Despite the positive influences of the Enlightenment on Lady Mary Montagu's letters, it is possible to detect the discourse of a class privilege, partially due to her husband's role as a diplomat in the Ottoman Empire. Montagu usually visited high-end places like seraglios and met upper-class Ottoman women. In other words, she spent most of her time in the Ottoman Empire with her social equals. Anita Desai points out in the Introduction of the *Turkish Embassy Letters*, that Montagu's travelogue reveals "a great anxiety to stress that the society Lady Mary moved in was 'of first quality', the houses she visited belonged to 'people of quality', even the nuns she met were 'all of quality.'" (1994: xxv) Anita Desai also states that the customs, culture, dress and art Lady Montagu praised were the attributes of upper class and she was not concerned with the poor and the negligible. (xxv) Montagu's criticality on the different languages spoken by different classes supports this argument:

The vulgar Turk is very different from what is spoke at Court or amongst the people of figure, who always mix so much Arabic and Persian in their discourse that it may very well be called another Language; and 'tis as ridiculous to make use of the expressions commonly used, in speaking to a Great Man or Lady, as it would be talk broad Yorkshire or Summerset shire in the drawing room. (Montagu: 1994: 75-76)

Furthermore, Montagu mentioned the prohibition of wine consumption in Islam for only the common and 'vulgar' Ottomans whereas high-class Ottomans were allowed to drink wine as it was acceptable for only the class privileged:

When I asked him how he came to allow himself that Liberty, he made answer, all Creatures of God were good and designed for the sue of Men; however that the prohibition of wine was a very wise maxim and meant for the common people, being the Source of all disorders amongst them, but that the Prophet never designed to confine those who knew how to use it with moderation; however scandal ought to be avoided, and that he never drank it in public. This is the general way of thinking amongst them, and very few forbear drinking wine that are able to afford it. (62-63)

It is possible to say that Montagu's points of view from the Ottoman Empire, and the comparisons between the Ottoman east and England were mainly about high-class members of society. Nevertheless, her perception and description of the Ottoman Empire are rational and unprejudiced, and she does not distance herself from the Ottomans she encounters. By frequently restoring established traditional, cultural and national British attitudes of the male travellers to the Ottoman Empire, she introduced her own discourse and arguments about

Ottomans and this particularity distinguishes her travelogue from her precedents' descriptions. Being a privileged woman brought her a better access to Ottoman female society. Thanks to her intimate encounters with Ottoman women, she was able to speak of the common points of English and Ottoman women, which makes her letters an unordinary female narrative in the eighteenth-century travel writings. Her empathy towards Ottoman women of the Ottoman East explicitly challenged previous representations of the Ottomans by male travellers.

CHAPTER II

IMPERIAL DISCOURSE AND AESTHETICS IN ELIZABETH CRAVEN'S

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CRIMEA TO CONSTANTINOPLE

Elizabeth Berkeley, born on 17 December 1750 in the City of Westminster as the third child of the fourth Earl of Berkeley, is mostly remembered for her eventful life and scandalous love affairs. She was only seventeen in 1767 when she married the Honourable William Craven, who later became the 6th Baron Craven. Their marriage, however, was not a successful one. Both Elizabeth Craven and her husband indulged in affairs. Despite the controversies, she had already given birth to six children and remained married to William Craven until they separated in 1783. Upon separation, Lady Elizabeth moved to Versailles, France, where she met Christian Frederick Charles Alexander, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Bayreuth, whom she later married. (Melman, 1992: 37)

What set Craven on a course of travel and life as an expatriate was her legal separation from her husband and six children and the financial difficulties resulting on the separation. Craven was deprived of her jointure... (Melman, 1992: 48)

It was after her relocation to France that Elizabeth Craven departed for her voyage, both to escape from the scandals and financial troubles that she had gone through during her marriage. In a sense, she “fled litigation, family problems, persecution, or unhealthy climates and sought safer, happier or healthier countries” (Adams, 1983: 67) and she chose to travel through Crimea to Constantinople. She always had a passion for writing and she wrote several books, plays and memoirs throughout her life.

From the beginning of *A Journey*, Craven creates a literary personality that fuses elements of the aristocratic heroine and the masculine adventurer. In addition to these romantic figures, she also plays the part of the aesthete and documentarian. Although Craven presents herself as a fine lady traveling in style, she also thwarts the typical attributes of this image by insisting on her independence. (Turhan, 2003: 32)

Already an author since the 1770s, she wrote *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople. In a Series of Letters from the Right Honourable Elizabeth Lady Craven, to His Serene Highness the Margrave of Brandebourg, Anspach, and Bareith. Written in the Year MDCCLXXXVI* during her travel to the East. Elizabeth Craven stated in the preface to the letters that she had to travel through Crimea to Constantinople between 1785 and 1786.

She started her journey from Paris in 1785, and visited Italy, Switzerland, Venice, Austria, Poland, Russia and Turkey in one year. Lady Elizabeth was in Turkey for three months in the summer of 1786.

Elizabeth Craven was unable to share her husband's title and rank because of their scandalous past, even though she was called Margravine in Europe. She was ostracized by the aristocratic high society, nevertheless it did not stop her from keeping up with the writing life style. Upon her husband Alexander's death in 1806, Craven moved to Naples where she died in 1828.

The position of both writers was characteristic and manifested the disabilities of married women, disabilities against which even aristocrats were not immune. Lady Montagu's marriage had not been settled, that is, no prenuptial agreement had been signed to secure her 'portion' in case of dissolution by divorce, or separation. When a few years after their return from Istanbul she separated from Wortley, she became propertyless and depended entirely on Wortley's good will. Craven's case was even more severe. Legally separated from William Craven, later sixth earl of Craven, she had been grudged her jointure and forcibly separated from her seven children. And her travelogue is a vindication of her status as legal wife and mother... (Melman, 1992: 88)

Elizabeth Craven also came from the nobility like her predecessor, Lady Montagu, and for her, travel meant emancipation from the economic and social restrictions of society ¹⁹. Although the two writers differ in the description of the East, they both took a stand against the patriarchal values and customs of Britain of the time by becoming two of the few earliest female travel writers who were able to discover foreign lands and take leads in travel writing genre despite the economic difficulties, scandals, social oppression they had experienced. But unlike Lady Montagu, Craven despised Eastern culture and traditions. Moreover, she implies throughout her letters that Ottomans are inferior than Western societies and praises English culture and values in her travel accounts. She displays a highly adventurous journey, trying to prove her courage and moral integrity as a woman who manages to survive in a foreign, Eastern country. In *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople*, Lady Elizabeth often targets at Lady Montagu's impressions of Turkey and contradicts with *Turkish Embassy Letters*.

¹⁹ Melman, Billie. *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work*. London: Macmillan. 1995. P.48

Elizabeth Craven states that she wrote about the customs and people of the countries she visited in her travelogue to meet her friends' curiosity:

The best I could give, and in the most agreeable manner to myself, was ... my letters ... in which, though in a cursory manner, I have given you a faithful picture of what I have seen. Besides curiosity my friends in these letters see at least for some time where the real Elizabeth Craven has been and where she is to be found. (Craven, 1789: 5)

She believed that she would be appreciated by her audience for reporting the difficult journey she experienced. Grewal states in *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel* (1996) that "all this was empowering for women who learned through their travels how strong they could be in enduring and living through many adventure" and "the braving of the dangers of travel became an imperial strength that justified imperialism." (Grewal, 1996: 80) The purpose of the documentation of her letters is to give a real description of what the 'real' Elizabeth Craven saw. Unlike Lady Montagu, Elizabeth Craven did not depict and describe as an observer but documented her observations to inform curious readers. Her journey, however, was more dangerous than Montagu's as Craven used public transport and had no escort. She travelled through Russia and Crimea to reach Istanbul, a route avoided by most Western travellers. Throughout her one-year-long journey, she wrote about society, nature, commercial life, beliefs, traditions, customs such as clothing, cemeteries and provinces of the Ottoman Empire and portrayed an opposite perspective towards Lady Montagu's descriptions of the Ottoman world.

Craven anticipates the critical discourse regarding the Ottoman Empire that arose during the rapid expansion of the second British Empire in the early nineteenth century. She both celebrates and critiques British customs when she expresses strong opinions regarding Ottoman commerce, administration of subjects, and treatment of women, all of which would prove to be so central to the consciousness of other writers in the next century. Craven presents to us in an incipient version just how this Ottoman counterimage could work to reflect negatively on the British, sometimes as a conscious rhetorical strategy, and sometimes as an inadvertent by product of an author's manifest purpose. She utilizes the same rhetorical strategies to prove her national pride as well as to criticize unsatisfactory elements of British social reality. (Turhan, 2003: 34)

Elizabeth Craven follows a critical and imperial discourse about the Ottoman Empire during the overseas expansion of the British Empire in the late eighteenth century. She describes Ottoman commerce and its' administration of Greek subjects by using a rhetorical

strategy to promote her national identity. She asserts the commercial expansion and paternalist ideology of early imperialism as followed:

Can any rational being, dear Sir, see nature without the least assistance from art, in all her grace and beauty, stretching out her liberal hand to industry and not with to do her justice? Yes, I confess, I wish to see a colony of honest English families here; establishing manufactures, such as England produces, and returning the produce of this country to ours – establishing a fair and free trade from hence, and teaching industry and honesty to the insidious but oppressed Greeks, in their islands – waking the indolent Turk from his gilded slumbers, and carrying fair Liberty in her swelling sails as she passes through Archipelago and the Mediterranean, to our dangerous (happily for us our dangerous) coast. (Craven, 1789: 188-189)

Elizabeth Craven's interest in turning Ottoman territories into a colony of Great Britain follows the imperial and commercial policies Britain started to accelerate after the American War of Independence in 1783, upon the loss of some of her oldest and most populated colonies. England turned its face to Asia, the Pacific and Africa for colonies, so Craven imagines Ottoman Empire as a playground for commercial entrepreneurs and cultural influencers. She assumes that new manufacturers established by England can result in fair and free trade, but more importantly they can teach minorities in the Ottoman Empire, like the oppressed Greeks, industry and honesty. It is possible to say that "Craven's colonialist discourse promulgates the idea of the British assimilation of the contemporary Greek 'other' in order to free him from his moral and cultural degeneracy." (Markidou, 2007: 25)

Her remarks are significant contributions to an emergent imperial discourse, displacing the classical, tolerant and largely ahistorical stance created by Montagu. (Turner, 1999: 15) Craven implies that England's paternalist duty to promote progress and welfare can bring liberty and prosperity for the Greeks, and in return Britain can take advantage on the industrial developments and commercial expansion. Her imperial gaze suggests that the goals of England's civilizing mission, to educate the insidious Greeks to preserve the ancient ruins, and to develop the lands industrially. (Turhan, 2003: 37) Nevertheless, the ambiguity in her discourse is unanswered as it is not clear what she meant by Liberty, whether freeing Greeks from the Ottoman Empire, or freeing them from public pressure of religious oppressions.

The Temple of Minerva, in the citadel of Athens, was used by the Turks as a magazine for powder, which blowing up has flung down such a quantity of beautiful sculpture that I should be very happy to have permission to pick up the broken pieces on the ground – but, alas, Sir, I cannot even have a little finger or a toe, for the Ambassador who had been a whole year negotiating for permission to convey to Constantinople a fragment he had pitched upon, and thought himself sure of, will be sadly disappointed.

The sailors were prepared with cranes, and everything necessary to convey this beautiful relick on board the Tarleton; when after the governor of the citadel, a Turk, had received us with great politeness, he took Mr. de Truguet aside, and told him, unless he chose to endanger his life, he must give up the thought of touching any thing [...] we returned to the Consul's very much concerned at the excessive injustice and ignorance of the Turks, who have really not the smallest idea of the value of the treasures they possess, and destroy them wantonly on every occasion. (256-57)

Nevertheless, Elizabeth Craven's concern about Greek antiquities is rather not based on the aesthetic value of ancient art but on their market value. She despises and contemns Ottomans, who are characterised as idle, indolent and ignorant in her letters, for not being able to protect or value the antiquities, but at the same time mentions a Turk's strict warning about not touching anything to protect the relic. She conducts a contradictory argument about the Ottoman way of antiques' protection because of her obscure critique.

Perhaps sir, it is lucky for Europe that the Turks are idle and ignorant—the immense power that Empire might have, were it peopled by the industrious and ambitious, would make it the ministers of the world—at present, it only serves as a dead wall to intercept the commerce and battles which other powers might create upon one another. (206–07)

Craven states that Ottoman Empire is no longer a military power or trade leader on the frontiers of Eastern Europe, it is only a dead wall which separates England from India. She hints at the fact that the Ottoman Empire is not a simple landscape of virgin resources waiting for English industry to pluck it up, but instead it is a battle-ground for other imperial powers. (Turhan, 2003: 36) Craven's observations on the current situation of the Ottoman Empire is reportedly true as in the eighteenth century:

We encounter contradictory tendencies: on the one hand, the central government made a real effort to regain control of its territory, a policy which included the reorganization and surveillance of the land routes. On the other hand, even though quite a few territorial losses were not final, and ultimately could be compensated for, we observe an increasing impact of usually European outsiders on the economy and socio-political arrangements of certain regions. (Faroghi, 2004: 65)

Craven implies the juxtaposition between the idleness and ignorance of Ottomans and industrious and ambitious English people to present the potential threat the Ottoman Empire could be to Europeans if it was not for their uselessness. According to her, "... the Turkish empire was to be driven from a situation, which seems by nature formed as a universal

passage for trading nations, which the inactivity of the Turks has too long obstructed.” (220) The natural trade routes such as the Bosphorus is so ineffectively used by the Ottomans that it would be a great benefit for England and other imperial powers if they were controlled by the liberty-carrying England.

The Ottoman Empire was populated by people from several different ethnical backgrounds and religions, the empire consisted of diversities. “It was the last multinational empire in the Balkans and the Middle East, and therefore had to adopt a new way of coexistence between different ethnic and religious groups.” (Ortaylı, 2012: 15) The central government was tolerant towards differences, the rights of the minorities were recognized and preserved in order to maintain a peaceful environment. In fact, for the non-Muslim minorities, in Ottoman history the system of *millet*²⁰ gave minorities a certain degree of autonomy within their own community based on membership of a religion, not on ethnical or linguistic differences:

... Ottoman society incorporated a number of self-enclosed religious communities that were saddled with certain legal, financial and administrative responsibilities, and which organized among themselves to take care of education or social welfare. Consequently, this millet system, too, has been regarded as constitutive of a certain tradition of local government... (Ortaylı, 2012: 46)

The Ottoman Empire allowed minorities to maintain their physical existence, language, sense of history, cultural traditions and religious integrity over several centuries (Lewis and Braude, 1982: 16). Therefore, Craven’s claims to bring liberty for minorities to allow them to speak their minds freely or practice their religion do not apply as minorities already had the rights to both. Furthermore, in contrast with Lady Mary’s appreciation of this diversity, Lady Craven was confused when she realized in Varna that the coast was inhabited by Turks, Greeks and Armenians:

And now, Sir, we will turn to the Greek, which are as numerous as the Turks here ... They retire with great fortunes, which they lay out in houses and gardens in the neighborhood of Constantinople, where they are pretty sure they shall not be suffered to die in peace, but are generally beheaded ... Greeks are prisoners in their own houses.... A strange infatuation when there is another empire whose religion is theirs, where they would meet with protection, and into which they might retire with their fortunes. The lyre of the ancient is often to be seen in the hands of the Greeks; but I suppose in ancient days, as in these, whatever harmony possessed their souls, it affected only their eyes. (Craven, 1789: 238)

²⁰ A separate law that allowed non-Muslim minorities to rule themselves under their own laws. (Ortaylı, 2012: 46)

Elizabeth Craven argued that the idleness of Ottomans provided peace and wealth for other ethnic and religious communities, as well as enabling the minorities to be free to practice their religion or customs. Nevertheless, Craven's observations and convictions contradict each other. Her observations show that non-Muslim communities such as Greeks and Hungarians live in peace, prosperity and happiness thanks to the protective and respectful policies of the Ottoman government, whereas their lives are constantly under threat. She states that "Turkish idleness, which probably ever remain the same, gives a fine opportunity for the inhabitants of Hungary to become richest and happiest people in the world" (325), while at the same time arguing that minorities live at the risk of their lives. She believes that Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire are not treated as well as Muslim citizens and they feel like they are from "a nation of strangers who are forced to remain in it." (242)

Elizabeth Craven's harsh criticism against the idleness of the Ottomans is not limited to commercial or minority issues. Throughout her travels in the Ottoman Empire, she refers to Ottomans as "the society of most ignorant and uninformed men upon earth." (Craven, 1789: 209-210) In the same letter from Constantinople in 1786, she mocks the daily routine of Ottomans as if the whole empire was made up of incapable, mentally deficient individuals:

The quiet stupid Turk will sit a whole day by the side of the Canal, looking at flying kites and children's boats – and I saw one who was enjoying the shade of an immense platane tree – his eyes fixed on a kind of bottle, diverted by the noise and motion of it while the stream kept it in constant motion. How the business of this nation goes on at all I cannot guess, for the cabinet is composed generally of ignorant mercenaries... (207)

Craven comments on the inefficacy of Ottomans in all aspects of life upon seeing an Ottoman person near the sea looking at a bottle streaming down the water. The only capability of Ottomans according to Craven is that they row very well, "which is a thing quite incompatible with the idleness visible in all ranks of people." (206) Elizabeth Craven despises almost every single activity or ritual of Ottomans from trade to religion, customs to physical appearance, and she deploys imperial discourse based on ethnical discrimination and English supremacy. Unlike Montagu, Craven is not fond of, or tolerant towards Ottoman culture and values.

Particularly in the last four centuries – the conventionally labeled ages of European exploration, European expansion, European imperialism, and European retreat –

especially western Europe has imagined itself politically, philosophically, and geographically at the center of the world. Europeans and neo-Europeans in America and elsewhere have routinely judged art, literature, religion, statecraft, and technology according to their own authorities and criteria.... In this schema the Ottoman Empire joins the ranks of the “others” – exotic, inexplicable, unchanging, and acted upon by the powers of ruling authorities in Europe. (Goffman, 2004: 5)

According to Craven, “a Turk is a predestinarian in most things, since it is neither birth nor abilities that can give him place or power” (Craven, 1789: 208) and “a figure, wrapped up like a mummy, can easily kneel down by another without being suspected” (218) while worshipping. Craven’s European point of view towards Ottomans causes her to label them as “two-legged animals” (295). Her hatred towards Ottomans is so intense and deep that she confesses to regret not murdering a Turk in a letter from Varna in 1786: “I think of all these two-legged animals I have seen, I should regret killing a Turk at least.” (295) Turkophobic Craven refers to Ottomans as two-legged animals and instead of understanding and cherishing Ottomans, she returns home with an obscure feeling of violence and regret.

Elizabeth Craven admits that the journey from Crimea to Constantinople was difficult and dangerous for she did not have the privilege of travelling with a high-class transportation and treatment, unlike Lady Mary Montagu’s experience. Craven’s descriptions of Ottomans are mostly of lower classes of society and therefore she makes a class distinction between herself and common Ottoman people. It is possible to say that with images of middle class Ottoman women, Craven challenges and contradicts Montagu’s accounts of the Ottoman elite women.

The way they walked in the streets were restricted by state rules and regulations in the 18th century Ottoman world. A young and single lady was recognized by the colour of her dress. She was expected to wear red and green clothes. Middle aged and married women put on less colourful clothes, and old ladies were almost always in black. The types of dresses also changed in different communities of the Empire. The Greek Orthodox, the ambassadors’ and merchants’ wives from Venice, France, and England; the Armenians and Turkish women of different ranks were all recognized by the way they dressed. The clothes, then, were social symbols; and they indicated how gender, class, rank, religion and ethnicity were recognized in 18th century Ottoman society. (Baktır, 2007: 175)

Baktır explains the clothing regulations for people with different social ranks, religion, class and age, and further states that different communities in the Ottoman Empire had various clothing customs. Elizabeth Craven, though, finds the *yesmak* and *veil* that common

Ottoman women wear ugly and disgusting, contrasting Lady Montagu's remarks about the cultural significance and practicality of these clothes, which were enjoyable to wear for Montagu. Craven says:

As to the women, as many, if not more than men are to be seen in the streets-- but they look like walking mummies. A large robe of dark green covers them from the neck to the ground, over that a large piece of muslin, which wraps the shoulders and the arms, another which goes from head and eyes; judge, Sir, if all these coverings do not confound all shapes or air so much, that men or women, princes and slaves, may be concealed among them. I think I have never seen a country where women may enjoy so much liberty, and are free from all reproach, as in Turkey. A Turkish husband that sees a pair of slippers at the door of his harem must not enter; his respect for the sex prevents him from intruding when a stranger is there to visit; how easy then for men to visit and pass for women! If I was to walk about the streets here I would certainly wear the same dress, for the Turkish women call other names, when they meet them with their faces uncovered. (Craven, 1789: 205)

Elizabeth Craven's experience of the Ottoman gender ideology "stands in opposition to the restrictive idea of gendered space which was becoming a fact of life in eighteenth-century England, and London especially." (Turner, 1999: 122) Craven has contrasting ideas about the appearance and function of veiling. Her observation of veiling clearly argues that this large piece of cover makes people like walking mummies. Nevertheless, to her, it conceals gender and class differences between people and therefore women can enjoy the utmost liberty in the Ottoman Empire.

The emphasis on sexual difference which became so marked in the eighteenth century was closely connected with the equally marked emphasis on the contrast between public and private spheres: the expanding masculine public sphere of political, civic, and intellectual life, and of industry and commerce, formed a counterpoint to the feminine private sphere, which centred on family life and on the care and early education of children. (Caine, 2001: 43)

Both Montagu and Craven put great emphasis on the restraints of the public sphere, of social and civic life in England and therefore accredit the notion of liberty to physical disguise. Thanks to veiling Ottoman women enjoyed the freedom of walking in the streets without being recognized: "women are perfectly safe from an idle, curious, impertinent public, and what is called the world can never disturb the ease and quiet of a Turkish wife." (Craven, 1789: 233)

As the seventeenth-century compendium *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* (1632) details, “[e]very feme covert [or married woman under English common law] is *quodammodo* [in a certain way] an infant, for see her power even in that which is most her own,” a list which includes the husband’s ownership of her inheritance, wages, and rents. This condition of legal nonage continued until the end of the nineteenth century, when the British Parliament finally passed the Married Women’s Property Act. (Andrea, 2008: 82)

Moreover, Craven was “aware of the constraints the doctrine of coverture placed on women, as she possessed no property of her own during her marriage” (82) and she pointed out the economic liberty of Ottoman women, acquired by Ottoman laws which provided Turkish women with rights to property and divorce. (Turhan, 2003: 37) Craven says: “the Turks in their conduct of our sex are an example to all other nations – A Turk has his head cut off – his papers are examined – everything in this house is seized – but the wife is provided for; her jewels are left her.” (Craven. 1789: 232 - 233) According to Turhan, “the English women found themselves wondering how they too could achieve such advantages” (Turhan, 2003: 37) and envied the economic freedom Ottoman women enjoyed. Therefore, Craven thinks “no women have so much liberty, safe from apprehension, as the Turkish” and they are “in their manner of living, capable of being the happiest creatures breathing.” (Craven, 1789: 233 – 234)

It is not that real women, individual and identified, lacked social validity in Ottoman consciousness. Rather, the integral category of ‘womankind’, though undifferentiated by class, vocation, or creed, was more fully realised and answered larger cultural needs. ‘Womankind’ comprehended a stock of images expressive of society’s anxieties and aspirations. Sometimes very good, sometimes very bad, women as womankind were staples of moralists and belletrists alike. (Zilfi, 2006: 226)

Craven’s generalization of the social and economic liberty Ottoman women categorizes the ‘womankind’ into one single stock of image. Furthermore, her undifferentiated criticism and insult are also towards Ottoman womankind. While reporting a similar scene like Lady Mary Montagu’s famous descriptions of women in a Turkish bath in Sophia, Craven describes the women in a bath in Athens in a rather deprecatory tone:

There were above fifty [women]; some having their hair washed, others dyed or plaited... I saw here Turkish and Greek nature, through every degree of concealment in her primitive state... and as they came out, their flesh looked boiled. These baths are great amusements of the women, they stay generally five hours in them; that is in the water and at their toilet together – but I think I never saw so many fat women at

once together, nor fat ones as fat as these...such a disgusting sight as this would have put me in an ill humour with my sex in a bath for ages. Few of these women had fair skins or fine forms – hardly any – hardly any – and Madame Gaspari tells me, that the encomiums and flattery a fine young woman would meet with in these baths, would be astonishing – I stood some time in the door-way between the dressing-room and the Bath, which last was circular, with niches in it for the bathers to fit in; it was a very fine room with a stone dome – and the light came through small windows at the top – (263-264)

She found women's habits of going to baths in the Ottoman Empire absurd and claimed that Ottoman women were fat, ugly and disgusting. Like Montagu, Craven also refused to undress at the baths. But unlike Montagu who uses allusions to European literature and art to describe naked women, Craven emphasizes Ottoman women's physicality, representing the other's body as disgusting and grotesque. (Mitsi, 2002: 136)

Both Montagu and Craven used detailed descriptions in relation with the nature of human beings in the scenery of hamams, nevertheless;

Craven cuts herself away from the moral-free aestheticism of Montagu's famous *tableau vivant*, which presents the bathers in Sophia in 1717. For another, Craven, uncharacteristically, abandons the classical analogues and the neo-classical terminology with that terminology's emphasis on terms like 'harmony', 'order' and 'proportion', inherited from Montagu and utilised by Craven elsewhere. (Melman, 1992: 112)

Elizabeth Craven is repulsed by the physicality and obesity of Ottoman women and it is possible to say that Craven attributes the lack of delicacy or fragility of human bodies as an obstacle for beauty. She challenges Lady Montagu's Neoclassicistic emphasis on women's white skins and perfect body proportions by associating their bodies with boiled flesh and claiming that almost none of them have fine forms. Lady Montagu thought that Ottoman women had natural complexion and large black eyes, which made them some of the most beautiful women in the world whereas Lady Craven argued that Ottoman women have "white and red ill applied, their eye-brows hid under one or two black lines – teeth black by smoking, and a universal sloop in the shoulders, made them appear rather disgusting than handsome." (Craven, 1789: 225-226) Craven recognised that the baths function as a public space for women, but dismissed them as a self-indulgent amusement, which destroyed rather than enhanced Ottoman women's appearance (Mitsi, 2008: 32).

Travel writings of the ‘dying’ Ottoman Empire and the ‘rising’ British Indian Empire here express great emphasis on emotion and sensation, and there is indeed propinquity of the texts to the crime and adventure fiction genres popular in the period. The involvement and description of strong feelings – love, loath, attraction, disgust, doubt and incomprehension... (Guégan, 2013: 95)

Craven’s condemning viewpoint of Ottoman women and Harem reflects the imperialist perspective of rising England, which according to Xavier Guégan is reflected through ambiguous feelings of appreciation and disgust in travel writings. Likewise, Craven praises the tidiness and cleanliness of Harems by saying “you can conceive nothing so neat and clean to all appearance as the interior of this Harem; the floors and passages are covered with matting of a close and strong kind; the colour of straw or reeds with which they are made of pale straw” (Craven, 1789: 224). Notwithstanding, she condemns the hamam routines of women in these words: “the Turkish woman pass most of their time in the bath or upon their dress; strange pastimes! The first spoils their persons, the last disfigures them. The frequent use of hot-baths destroys the solids, and these women at nineteen look older than I am at the moment.” (226) Elizabeth Craven’s representations of Ottoman women raises questions of aesthetic judgement and a Burkean perception of beauty can be applied to her travelogue.

On the whole, the qualities of beauty, as they are merely sensible qualities, are the following. First, to be comparatively small. Secondly, to be smooth. Thirdly, to have a variety in the direction of the parts; but fourthly, to have those parts not angular, but melted as it were into each other. Fifthly, to be of a delicate frame, without any remarkable appearance of strength. Sixthly, to have its colours clear and bright; but not very strong and glaring. Seventhly, or if it should have any glaring colour, to have it diversified with others. These are, I believe, the properties on which beauty depends; properties that operate by nature, and are less liable to be altered by caprice, or confounded by a diversity of tastes, than any others. (Burke, 1999: 107)

Edmund Burke did not support the idea that Beauty consists in proportion and harmony but “maintained that typical aspects of the beautiful were variety, smallness, smoothness, the gradual variation, delicacy, purity and fairness of colour, and also—to a certain extent—grace and elegance.” (Eco, 2004: 290) When Craven’s hamam scenery is applied to Edmund Burke’s perspective on beauty, it is possible to say that Ottoman women do not fit these qualities of beauty. He argues that “an air of robustness and strength is very prejudicial to beauty. An appearance of delicacy, and even of fragility, is almost essential to it” (Burke, 1999: 105) and women in Craven’s scenery are not small, delicate or fragile, but

fat, massive and disgusting. Their 'flesh look boiled' and disfigured hence their bodies are not smooth. Their body forms are not so perfectly shaped because there is 'a universal sloop in the shoulders'. The colour of their teeth are 'black by smoking' and therefore do not suit Burke's ideal scale of colour of beauty. By constantly putting emphasis on Ottoman women's ugliness and appearance looking like walking mummies²¹, Craven uses Burkean conceptualization of the beauty as a rhetorical strategy to de-aestheticize Ottoman women.

The change in aesthetic sensibilities and its political connotations further emerge in Craven's visit to the Turkish baths in Athens. The juxtaposition between Craven and Montagu's descriptions reveals the striking difference between the two travellers, underlining the passage from the Neoclassical to the picturesque. (Mitsi, 2008: 30)

The change in aesthetic discourse in Craven's letters reveals a striking passage from Neoclassical order to Romantic sublime and picturesque; from Enlightenment to Romanticism. "The Neoclassicist school saw Beauty as a quality of the object that we perceive as beautiful and for this reason it fell back on Classical definitions such as 'unity in variety' or 'proportion' and 'harmony'" (Eco, 2004: 275) whereas "in the eighteenth century, however, certain terms began to become popular: 'genius', 'taste', 'imagination' and 'sentiment' and it is these words that let us see that a new concept of beauty was coming into being." (275) Neoclassicism's emphasis on notions like harmony, order and proportion in art, which go hand in hand with Enlightenment notions of rationality and natural law, are apparent in Montagu's work. Notwithstanding, Elizabeth Craven's descriptions of Ottoman women is quite the opposite of the proportioned beauty of Ottoman women in Montagu's letters. Craven has no particular interest in hamams or harems, but "she discloses a preference for 'Nature', or picturesque landscapes." (Melman, 1992: 87)

But I am certain no landscape can please or amuse in comparison with the varied view, which the borders of this famed Straight compose - Rocks, verdure, ancient castles, built on the summit hills of Geneose - modern kiosks, minarets and large planate-trees, rising promiscuous in the vallies, large meadows - multitudes of people, and boats swarming on the shore and on the water; and what was particular, nothing to be seen like a formal French garden - the Turks have so great a respect for natural beauties - that if they must build a house where a tree stands, they leave a large hole for the tree to pass through and increase in size, they think of the branches of it the prettiest ornament for the top of the house; in truth, Sir, contrast a chimney to a beautiful foliage and judge if they are right or wrong - The coast is so safe that a large

²¹ "As to the women, as many, if not more than men are to be seen in the streets-- but they look like walking mummies. A large robe of dark green covers them from the neck to the ground, over that a large piece of muslin, which wraps the shoulders and the arms, another which goes from head and eyes." (Craven, 1789: 205)

fleet of Turkish vessels is to be seen in every creek, most of which are intermingled with the trees, a graceful confusion and variety make this living picture the most poignant scene I ever beheld. (Craven, 1789: 199)

According to Umberto Eco, “in the eighteenth century ruins were appreciated precisely for their incompleteness, for the marks that inexorable time had left upon them, for the wild vegetation that covered them, for the cracks and the moss” (2004: 284) and Elizabeth Craven’s fascination by the scenery in Constantinople reflects the appreciation of entanglement. Her description of the landscape presents a picturesque depiction in which rocks, ancient castles, kiosks, people boats, large trees and the sea are intermingled with each other. William Gilpin’s states in “Picturesque Travel” essay in *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to Which is Added a Poem, on Landscape Painting* (1792): “... among all the objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of castles, and abbeys.” (46) Craven graphically portrays a composition the objects of picturesque travel, sources of amusements which the mind is gratified by. (Gilpin, 1792: 46)

I can give you no just idea of the beauty of the trees; which particularly in these burial places, are never touched, therefore spread and grow in the most luxuriant and graceful disorder. There are no bounds set, or fences to refrain or design the form of these burials, some extend a mile or two; and, if it was not for one disagreeable reflexion, would be as pleasant to a foreigner as a Turk... (Craven, 1789: 219)

To Craven, “Constantinople and the entrance of Bosphorus by the sea of Marmara is the most majestic, magnificent, graceful and lively scene the most luxuriant imagination can desire to behold.” (210) Like the entrance of the city, the burial places also get her attention with their dense and jumble forestry. In between the sublime and the beautiful, characterised by ‘ruggedness’, ‘ruin’, and ‘the destruction of symmetry’ (Mitsi, 2002: 23), Craven’s picturesque depicts a destruction of symmetry with the large graveyards, rugged hills of Geneose (current Galata), ancient ruins of Constantinople, large meadows and vessels. Her hateful remarks on Ottoman society and politics are reversed into deep admiration in the matter of landscape and picturesque.

I can give you no other idea of the size of some of these beautiful trees, but by telling you it corresponds to the gigantic landscape of which they make the finest ornament -

yes my Sir, the largest oaks you can have seen would look, set down by these, as little broomsticks. (Craven, 1789: 213)

Picturesque objects such as rainfalls, oceans or volcanos arise terrific and horrific emotions, and these overwhelming feelings stemmed from the objects' or phenomena's enormity, infinity or obscurity. Aesthetic objects regarded as beautiful, however, are generally small, smooth and in order; sublime items are experienced intense, powerful and overwhelming. "The Sublime implies vastness of dimensions, ruggedness and negligence, solidity, even massiveness, and darkness." (Eco, 2004: 290) and it "comes into being with the unleashing of passions like terror, it flourishes in obscurity, it calls up ideas of power, and of that form of privation exemplified by emptiness, solitude and silence." (290) Picturesque objects can be in irregular, wild, forceful, or lively. In this particular description of oak trees in Constantinople, they are picturesque, massive and long structures composing a gigantic but terrific landscape. According to Gilpin, someone who has seen only one oak-tree has no complete idea of an oak in general, but if she / he who has seen thousands of oak-trees and its varieties, obtain a fulfilling idea and pleasure of it. (Gilpin, 1792: 51) Craven's appreciation of the trees in Constantinople is an example for Gilpin's idea of amusement arose from picturesque awareness.

It is no wonder Constantine chose it for the seat of the empire. Nature has composed of earth and water such a landscape that taste, unassisted by ambitious reflections, would naturally desire to give the picture living graces... (Craven, 1789: 210)

Beauty, sublime and picturesque are related notions in Romanticism which celebrates the incomprehensible aspects of nature such as its immensity and disorder unlike Enlightenment's rationalist perspective on Nature that can be understood and explained by reason and empiricism. While Enlightenment aims to understand Nature by empiric and rationalist methods, Romanticism cherishes and appreciates Nature with sentimentality and feelings. Craven prefers the instinctive pleasure or taste of Nature 'unassisted by ambitious reflections' of empirical or scientific reasoning. She refers to Constantine the Great, the founder of Eastern Roman Empire and Constantinople, to describe how desirable and magnificent the landscape of Constantinople is.

Edmund Burke's definitions of sublime and beauty in *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* are key to explain Craven's remarks on

Ottoman picturesque. He defines the sublime as a quality experience that triggers the feelings of pain and danger which produces "the strongest emotion that the mind is capable of feeling." (Burke, 1999: 36) Sublime causes astonishment, admiration, horror, terror, fear and respect. Craven's admiration towards the picturesque raises sublime feelings of respect and passion. The landscape of Constantinople is so enchanting for Craven that upon her departure from the city she says: "Adieu for the last time, from this beautiful and sublime situation, which must make all landscapes trifling to me for the future." (Craven, 1789: 287-288) She thinks that she may not be able to face such a splendid landscape in the future.

It seems that everything in nature which has remarkable advantages, has likewise some misfortunes attending it that counterbalance the good, so as to reduce the portion of happiness to a level for mankind – This enchanting country, the climate, the objects, the situation of it, makes it an earthly Paradise; but the plague – but earthquakes – what terrifying subjects, to make the thinking part fly it for ever. If things and persons may be compared, is it not a beautiful woman, who is handsomer than most of her sex, with accomplishments equal to her sex; but whom the world, her very inmates envy those advantages – and might not base passions that surround her frighten her great admirers from trusting her bewitching charms. (Craven, 1789: 216)

Craven follows a binary discourse on the advantages and disadvantages of the power and vastness of nature when describing the volcanic Grecian islands in the Sea of Marmara near Constantinople. The balance between the picturesque representing glamorousness of nature, and catastrophic side of nature which leads to destruction and death, are successfully treated in Craven's words. The metaphor of a beautiful and successful women whose admirers are frightened of her charms symbolizes the sublime, which is "the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature is astonishment, and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror." (Burke, 1999: 53) And because "the mind is so entirely filled with its object that it cannot entertain any other, nor reason on that object which fills it ... no passion so effectually robs the mind of all its power of acting and reasoning as fear." (53) Burke's emphasis on the astonishment leading to terror when facing with the sublime is Craven's reaction to the volcanic islands' captivating picturesque and potential danger.

I have seen a horrible sight, though not a new one to those who inhabit in Constantinople or Pera. Yesterday I went upon the Canal ... and at night a dreadful fire broke out in Constantinople. ... I went up with the Ambassador and many more persons into the Observatory and stayed till three in the morning and made my remarks. The houses are like tinder, and burn as fast as matches from their slight

construction and material, which is wood – The scene of horror and confusion was great. (Craven, 1789: 229)

Likewise, Craven is fascinated by the dreadful fire broke out in Constantinople and the scene of horror is an appreciation of the Sublime. Like a thunderstorm or a deep valley, the fire evokes strong emotions of horror and fascination. According to Burke, the light “must be attended with some circumstances, besides its bare faculty of shewing other objects” (1999: 73) to cause the sublime, and the fire, which causes horror and confusion, becomes the sublime for Craven and hence she brings an aesthetic response to fire. A similar sublimity was apparent in Craven’s letter from Athens, which describes her visit to the cave of Antiparos. She says:

I confess to you, that had it not been that my pride rose superior to my fears, I never should have gone down. When I had got about two or three yards into the narrow entrance of the cavern, the smoke of the torches, which could only find issues there, almost took my breath away, and I was forced to set myself down, or rather lie upon the rocks – as I almost fell suffocated ... and I took courage and descended. had it not been that my pride rose superior to my fears, I never would have gone down (Craven, 1789: 253)

“The grotto is an emblem of beauty beyond history and culture, sublime and eternal” (Mitsi, 2008: 29) and Craven exhibited both her sensibility in accordance with her definition of herself as a sentimental and adventurous traveller seeking the romantic and the picturesque in the preface of her travelogue, and her supercilious, imperial courage to enter a shadowy space of the ‘unknown’. In short, Craven’s critical stance towards the Ottoman Empire heavily depended on the historical developments that turned England into an imperial power, as well as on the change in aesthetic sensibilities from the beginning to the end of the eighteenth century. (Kolocotroni and Mitsi, 2008: 8) Thereof, Elizabeth Craven’s *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople* (1789) demonstrates a shift from an Enlightenment set of ideas into an imperial and Romantic discourse in several aspects, while at the same time implicating a pursuit of liberty for English women in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

England's interaction with the East increased in the eighteenth century due to colonial expansion, and communication with new cultures made it available for travel writers to question societies, nature, orthodox beliefs and knowledge. Sea power and commerce brought great wealth to England, and the military and economic power England gained accelerated the colonial expansion. In the meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire's geopolitical importance as a bridge between Asia and Europe made it a popular destination for merchants, diplomats and travellers. It was not a foreign and unknown land to eighteenth-century English travellers. It was, nevertheless, with the rise of English economic, military and political developments along with emerging imperialism in the eighteenth century, interest towards Ottoman Empire gained momentum. Relatedly, the Ottoman Empire started to become also a popular destination for travel writers. Lady Mary Montagu and Lady Elizabeth Craven travelled to the Ottoman Empire during this transition period when England was gradually becoming an imperial power. Both authors created aesthetic discourses by putting great emphasis on Ottoman culture, society, women, domestic and daily life of Ottomans, harems, hamams and landscape. Nevertheless, they portrayed contrasting ideas about Ottoman people and culture. The analysis of the letters of Lady Montagu and Craven reveals that the political and cultural changes along the eighteenth century are important factors in explaining the differences in their visions of Ottoman Empire. Moreover their own social status determined distinct travelling conditions as well as the introduction to a different social milieu, a circumstance which may have widened the gap between their visions of the Ottoman culture.

Lady Mary Montagu constantly made references to male travel writers who visited the Ottoman Empire before her. Instead of proving their arguments, Montagu criticized and refused their observations and convictions about Ottomans. To her, these male travellers' accounts were wrong, unrealistic and ridiculous. She was more privileged as a woman traveller as she could easily enter incognito spaces of Ottoman life which were restricted to only women. Hence, Montagu argued that male travellers' accounts about Ottoman women did not reflect reality because they were not allowed to be around or inside these female-only spaces. By visiting harems and hamams, Montagu gained inside knowledge about the actual Ottoman women's lives. Given these, Montagu's criticism and refusal of previous opinions on Ottoman East can be associated with Enlightenment's methodological doubt and questions

putative knowledge. She rejects stereotypical Western images on the sexuality of Eastern women and handles such issues with an unbiased and ouvert attitude. By reading and reverting previous knowledge and observations on the Ottoman Empire, she connects past ideas and judgements to her travel discourse. In other words, she uses the existing knowledge to make a new and alternative interpretation of a similar context.

Lady Mary Montagu was particularly interested in the position and condition of women in Ottoman society, and she visited several houses and hamams throughout her travels. One of the most thrilling aspects of her visits was the Turkish bath, a space of social interaction, beauty and entertainment. Instead of depicting Ottoman women in the hamam as strange and ‘other’, she chose to represent them even more open-minded, tolerant and enlightened than Western women. In Enlightenment rationality, nature can be known and explained with empirical reasoning and overall, Montagu’s Ottoman sceneries can set examples for empirical knowledge gained by face-to-face experience.

Admiring the natural beauty of women, Montagu mostly portrays Neoclassical beauty principles of proportion and simplicity while at the same time neutralizing the eroticized and exoticized presentations of Ottoman women by male travellers. She observed the Ottomans from a privileged female perspective, which made it easier for her to clarify stereotypical judgements of Westerns about Ottomans. She believed that social and cultural differences between England and the Ottoman Empire did not create fundamental differences, on the contrary, she argued that Ottoman women had more liberty than English women. In Montagu’s letters, Ottoman women were a lot freer than what male travel writers remarked on. To her, veiling provided Ottoman women with sexual and social freedom, and English women did not have such liberty in the eighteenth century. Ottoman women also had a certain degree of economic independence as they had the right to inherit and owe their own money.

Despite her remarks on Ottoman women’s liberty, Montagu believed that Islamic despotism objectified women as breeding machines. With empirical and sceptical investigation of Ottoman women, she criticized and rejected putative customs and practises of Islam. She implied that religion restricts individual’s liberty, a view also Kant subscribed in his 1784 essay “What is Enlightenment?”, and raises doubts the rationality of religion. Her scepticism was not limited to Islam as she questions the vow of virginity in Christendom. Montagu’s approach to religion based on reason and rational thinking reminds Enlightenment’s critique of religion. Within the same context, Montagu pointed out that

rational, sceptical and critical approaches to religion were available in the Ottoman Empire as well for she met with deist Ottoman intellectuals.

Explaining the nature and natural law were the basis of the scientific method in the Age of Enlightenment. A growing interest in physics, biology and other fields of science increased questioning and exploration of human beings. Classification of human races were based on physical, behavioural and psychological observations. Montagu's description of the mixture of different races in Constantinople may set a great example for such observations. Her empirical reasoning on the visible results of the combination of different genetic characteristics portrayed an early exploration of modern genetics. Moreover, focus on the natural world for the sake of the happiness and prosperity of human beings increased medicalization during the Enlightenment. Health was an important element of the natural state of the body, and could be maintained and developed with the help of medicine. Montagu's encounter with small pox vaccination in the Ottoman Empire was a significant step for England and Europe as she is the first person to introduce the practice of small pox inoculation in England despite criticisms at the time.

Nevertheless, it is possible to say that Lady Mary Montagu's discourse from the Ottoman Empire is a class privileged encounter because of the fact that she usually visited high class spaces and described upper class Ottoman women. She mostly explained customs, culture, dress and art of upper class Ottomans and did not mention lower class Ottomans. Despite this class privilege, she did not alienate or distance herself from the Ottomans, and portrayed a rational, unprejudiced and enlightened approach towards the places she visited and people she met.

Like Lady Mary Montagu, Elizabeth Craven wrote about Ottoman society, landscape, commercial life, religious beliefs, local traditions and customs, and nature. Notwithstanding, Craven had a negative perspective towards Ottomans, which profoundly challenged Lady Montagu's descriptions. Craven stated that she documented her observations of the Ottoman Empire to inform curious readers. Her journey to Constantinople was more dangerous and less privileged than Montagu's because Craven used public transport without any escort. She travelled through Crimea to Constantinople alone, a route famed for being dangerous. Her insistence on being an adventurous traveller implies the spirit of the highly adventurous imperial expeditions that were later carried out by several travel writers.

In the late eighteenth century, when England was increasing her overseas expansion, Elizabeth Craven followed a critical and imperial attitude about the Ottoman Empire. Her focus was on the administration of minorities and commerce in the Ottoman Empire. She harshly criticized Ottoman incompetency in commerce and trade and this rhetorical strategy promoted her national pride as an English/British citizen. She also followed a paternalist ideology towards Greeks, wishing to make them a colony of England to bring liberty and civilization. Her remarks moved from Montagu's apolitical and tolerant stance to a rapidly emerging colonial discourse and early imperialism in England. She also believed that the Ottoman Empire did not pose a threat to Europe due to its inactivity in using its geopolitical position with an implication of England's superiority over the Ottoman Empire in administration, trade and military issues.

Although she claimed that England would be a better 'colonizer' than the Ottoman, she had contradictive arguments on the minorities in the Ottoman Empire. She claimed that Ottoman ignorance and idleness meant peace and wealth for minorities because under Ottoman rule, everyone was free to practice her / his religion or customs. She observed the peaceful and happy environment minorities had along with great wealth, but she insisted they lived under constant threat; her ambiguous ideas and remarks about minorities in Ottoman Empire continues throughout the letters.

It is possible to say that Elizabeth Craven was a Turkophobic who despised almost every single detail about Ottoman society, traditions and even physical appearance of people. She had a discriminating and othering stance towards Ottomans, often implying Western supremacy. Craven did not feel empathy or admiration to Ottoman people, especially women. Although, like Montagu, Craven believed that veiling provided women liberty, which according to her made Ottoman women the happiest creatures living in the World, she was disgusted by their looks and claimed that they were ugly, fat and grotesque. Craven's repulsion of Ottoman women's physical appearance can be referred as a rhetorical strategy to de-aestheticize Ottoman women through an imperial gaze.

However, a change in aesthetic appreciation and discourse from Montagu's Neoclassical representation to a Romantic and sentimental perception is noticeable in Craven's letters. Craven did not have an interest in hamams or harems, but she preferred Nature and landscape of the Ottoman Empire. Her description of Constantinople's landscape with an emphasis on disorder and divergent look of ancient ruins, steep cliffs, forests and water passages presented eighteenth-century picturesque taste and Sublime. Contrary to her

hatred of Ottoman society and traditions, she felt deep admiration to the Nature and confessed her fear, horror or satisfaction when she encountered with the Sublime.

As a result, we can conclude that, Montagu's descriptions of the Ottoman Empire indicate features of Enlightenment, whereas Craven's letters represent the Ottomans and their landscape within an imperial and Romantic discourse.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation used travel writings to analyse not only the host country but also the impact of changes taking place in the home country. It aimed at reading Lady Mary Montagu's *The Turkish Embassy Letters* and Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople* in an historical context to demonstrate that earliest English female travel writers' views on Ottoman Empire differed in relation with the changes occurred throughout the eighteenth-century in England. The binary approach displayed by Montagu and Craven were analysed with regard to these political, intellectual and artistic changes. A literature survey on historical and theoretical background offered the theoretical and historical basis for this dissertation. This basis was then used to determine the themes for analysing the letters. "The Enlightenment Traveller: An Inquiry into Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *Turkish Embassy Letters*" and "Imperial Discourse and Aesthetics in Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople*" chapters were developed within this framework.

The analysis of the writings of the two travellers suggest that the conflicting visions of Ottoman Empire root in the political and cultural changes along the eighteenth century. Instead of reducing their different views to biographical incidents and social and economic status, this study aims to prove that their particular approaches testify two distinct paradigms. Montagu's representation of Ottoman world reflects the Enlightenment's frame of mind and aesthetics, while Elizabeth Craven's *A Journey Through the Crimea to Constantinople* differs from that of Montagu's and reflects a framework of imperialism in England and aesthetics of Romanticism. Further studies which includes many more writers and which extends the destinations to include other destinations in the East, may help to develop a more comprehensive answer to assess how changing intellectual framework from Enlightenment to Romanticism affects the vision of the East. The analysis carried out in this study can be considered as a contribution in this regard.

This dissertation argues that cultural and political factors are important in explaining differences in their interpretation of the strange, unfamiliar surroundings, both about human and natural elements, and how far are they prepared to absorb these new data. These considerations bring in a new perspective to these two travellers' letters. Reading eighteenth century women travellers within the scope of Enlightenment, Romanticism and Imperialism opens up discussions on critical interpretations of the eighteenth century intellectual and

philosophical movements, concurrently brings new questions into studies in travel writing. The conclusion drawn from this dissertation is that, Lady Montagu's and Lady Craven's travel writings deserve an analysis of the historical and cultural context from which they wrote their letters

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